

Back Injuries

BULLETIN NO:2609

DATE:September 2026

ISSUE – Preventing Back Injuries in the Workplace

Back injuries are one of the most common workplace injuries and can occur during everyday activities such as lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling and moving equipment or people. Taking a few extra moments to assess a task and use safe manual-handling techniques can significantly reduce the risk of injury.

Before you lift	Before moving an item ask yourself • Is the load too heavy or awkward for me to handle safely? • Can I use equipment or another method instead of lifting? • Do I need assistance from another staff member? • Is the pathway clear and safe? • Do I know where the load is going? • If in doubt, stop and ask for assistance.
Safe Lifting Practices	When lifting or carrying • Keep your feet stable and maintain a balanced stance. • Bend at your knees and hips rather than bending from your back. • Keep the load close to your body. • Avoid twisting while lifting or carrying. • Turn by moving your feet rather than twisting your torso. • Lift and lower loads in a controlled manner. • Avoid lifting loads above shoulder height where possible. • Do not attempt to lift a load that is too heavy or awkward to manage safely.
Working as a Team	For heavy Bulky or awkward items • Ask for assistance before attempting the lift. • Agree on the lifting technique and destination. • Communicate clearly throughout the movement. • One person should coordinate the lift where appropriate. • Stop immediately if the load becomes unstable or cannot be controlled.
If you experience Pain or discomfort	• Do not ignore back pain or continue an activity that is causing discomfort. • Stop, notify your supervisor and follow your organisation's injury reporting and first-aid procedures. • Early reporting can help ensure that appropriate assistance is provided and may prevent a minor injury from becoming more serious.

Key Message

Think before you lift, Plan the task, use the right equipment and ask for help when needed. Your safety is everybody's responsibility.

PLAN-ASSESS-LIFT-SAFELY-ASK FOR HELP-REPORT INJURIES