

# ON THE JOB

## BACK SAVERS

Learning how to lift and carry loads properly may be the most important way to protect yourself from injury on the job. No matter what your size or strength, knowing the proper lifting techniques makes your job easier and safer.

### *Plan Your Lift*

Evaluate your object. Is it heavy? Awkward to carry? Can you see around it? Is its weight evenly distributed and stable? Are there sharp edges or protruding nails?

Review your route. Choose a flat, straight path that is clear of items that could make you trip or slip. Check that the unloading area is clear.

### *How To Lift*

Stand close to the object with your feet apart for balance. If the object is small enough, keep it between your legs.

Bend your knees and lower yourself into a squatting position while keeping your back upright.

Grip the object firmly with your whole hand. Use your palms, not just your fingers.

Tighten your stomach muscles and, keeping your back upright, straighten your legs. Pivot around your hip joint. Move slowly. Jerky motions strain muscles.

Keep the load close to your body. Keep your elbows tucked in close to your body.

Move slowly and carefully. If you have to turn, move your feet first, then bring your hips and shoulders around. Do not twist; keep your shoulders and feet facing forward at all times.

Face the unloading area and bend your knees to bring the object down. Keep your fingers clear of the bottom. Place the object down near your feet and push or slide it

into place. How you put down the load is as important as how you pick it up.

### *Helpful Hints*

- Split large loads into smaller, easier-to-manage loads.
- Carry long loads on your shoulder with the front end high.
- When transferring objects, try to use a pallet or table so you're lifting at waist height.
- Use forklifts, carts and hand-trucks whenever possible. 

