

Safety Spotlight - Back Injury Prevention

Back injuries can have a serious impact on a worker's entire life. No matter what industry you are in or job you do, there are tasks that can put workers' back health at risk.

- Lifting things as light as a box or as heavy as furniture.
- Repetitive tasks that require things like bending and twisting.
- Working on or with equipment that vibrates like a front-end loader or a jack hammer.
- Sitting at desks or standing in one spot for long periods of time as is common with office work, or working as a cashier.

Follow these six steps to preventing back injury in your workplace:

1. **Spot the hazards** – Understand the common causes of injury (overexertion, poor ergonomics, and repetitive or inactive positions), and find the tasks and physical layouts that could cause an incident or injury from occurring.
2. **Policies and Procedures** – Have clear guidance material for staff to refer to. Be specific about when and where they should use support, PPE, or ask for help.
3. **Communicate and train your staff** – Have resources to help make staff aware of back injury prevention. The WSCC has resources to help you train staff.
4. **Convenience of supports** – Think through your office layout. Make sure supports and PPE are convenient to grab when lifting. Workers are more likely to use aids when it is readily available.
5. **Teamwork and a Strong Safety Culture** – Remind employees to ask for help, and to help one another in return. As well, remind them that frequent stretch breaks, and breaks to move around are encouraged for their health and well-being.
6. **Early Reporting** – Help workers learn and understand the signs and symptoms of injury, and encourage them to report any concerns early. Timely reporting will lead to early treatment and could prevent further or permanent injury.

Available Resources:

WSCC encourages you to talk with workers about back injury prevention. Here are resources that you can use during safety discussions:

- [Topic overview](#) – review the steps and recommends for injury prevention.
- [Video on lifting safely](#) – use in your safety meeting.
- Safety Bulletin on [sprains and strains](#) – email these out to staff or post them on safety boards.

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- Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) resources – An [infographic](#) on desk ergonomics, a [fact sheet](#) on desk stretching, and a poster on [safe lifting techniques](#) are just some of the available resources. Send these links to your staff to review, or even print them out and hang up in their office.

Visit WSCC's [website](#) for more information and resources on preventing back injury, or [contact us](#) today to speak with a safety inspector.