Safety Briefing for February

Proper Lifting Techniques

1. Assess the Situation

Before lifting or carrying a heavy object, assess the situation. Ask yourself the following question?

- Can you lift this load or is it a two-person lift?
- How far will you have to carry the load?
- Is the path of travel clear of clutter, cords, slippery areas, overhangs, stairs, curbs, or uneven surfaces?
- Will there be doors that are closed? Ask someone to hold the door open or place a wedge under the door to keep open.
- Once the load is lifted will it block your view, will you be able to see the top of the load?
- Can the load be dissembled, carried in pieces, and then reassembled?
- Should you be wearing any personal protective equipment, such as gloves or safety glasses?

2. Before You Lift

Size up the load! Test the weight by lifting a corner of the object. If too heavy or if the object is an odd shape, STOP!

- If there is any doubt, ask for help. Two or three lifting a heavy object is safer than trying to do it yourself.
- Use a hand truck, pushcart, or mechanical lifting device.
- Consider using gloves that will improve your grip and protect your hands.
- Never lift anything unless you are sure that you do it safely using proper lifting techniques.
- Avoid over loading.
- Stretch out or “warm up” your back to increase circulation.

3. Lifting the Load

When lifting always keep your back straight or slightly arched. LET YOUR LEGS DO THE LIFTING!

- Start by placing your feet close to the load. Get firm footing.
- Center your body over your feet.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Squat down like a weightlifter, bending your knee and keeping your back straight or slightly arched.
- Grasped the load securely with your hands, and pull the load close to you. The farther the load is from your body the heavier it is.
- Smoothly lift straight up. Never twist your body while lifting, keeping your head up.
- Look straight ahead, not down while lifting.
- Always, lift with your legs, your leg muscles are powerful; the muscle bundles in the legs are each 8 to 10 inches or more in diameter, compared with the very thin ¼ - ½ inch layer of muscles along the back.

USING GOOD BODY MECHANICS

3. Carrying the Load

As You Carry the Load:

- Keep your back straight or slightly arched.
- Walk slowly and surely.
- Shift your feet to change directions. Never twist your back. Twisting actions puts a grinding, compressive weight on the cartilage in the spine; repeated frequently enough, the action can cause cartilage failure.
- Avoid leaning forwards or backwards.
- Avoid lifting over your head.
- If you become tired, set the load down, and rest for a few moments.