

Toolbox Talks 2

004: Assumptions That Can Hurt Your Back

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Think about some tasks on this job where a person's back may be at risk. Be prepared to give these as examples.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Assumptions that lead to back injury. This differs from a safety talk on proper lifting technique, and instead, focuses on other issues related to back injury.

Discussion notes:

Some back injury facts to think about

■ ***Some back injury facts to think about***

- It can be immensely painful. One careless act can cause severe damage to your back. Your body's major nerve bundle runs through your back. Picture the home run for a major cabling system. Your spinal cord is your "home run cable bundle."
- It can seem as though no injury occurred. Back injury is often deceptive, because damage can add up over time.
- Back problems can eventually keep you from doing electrical work. And they can provide pain and discomfort every day.
- Your back allows you to do many things, both on and off the job. What are some things you enjoy doing? Would you be willing to give up all of them, due to one careless act? Due to many careless acts over time?
- A back injury can occur at any time. It doesn't matter if you just need to finish up, you can't find someone to help you, or the right equipment is too far away. No excuse will protect your back. Only your attention to safety will protect your back.

Cautions

- Assess any situation that involves lifting, twisting, carrying, or putting any load on your back. Yes, look for big dangers. But remember that the small ones that can get you, too.
- You do not get a second chance to protect your back. There is no "do over," just damage done.

Assumptions

The following assumptions can hurt your back:

- "It can't wait." If it might put your back at risk, it can always wait.
- "The load is stable." A shifting load can easily cause back injury.
- "My grip won't slip." The average man has about 30 pounds of gripping pressure in each hand.
- "It's not that heavy." If you're tired or not warmed up, even an "easy lift" can result in torn ligaments and tendons. And not just in your back.
- "I don't need help." Famous last words.
- "It doesn't matter how I stand or what's on my feet." Your posture affects the forces applied to your back with each step. And even as you simply sit. Shoes in poor condition allow repeated small injuries to the back, knees, and hip joints.

Review and discussion

[Perform the demonstration with the crew member you selected earlier.]

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Participant's Signature and Date

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