

**SOLVENT SAFETY**

Solvents are liquids or gases that dissolve other substances, which makes them very useful in the workplace where they serve a variety of purposes. But although they're widely used, they can also be hazardous.

Breathing fumes or getting certain solvents on your skin can lead to serious health problems. In addition, many solvents are flammable.

When using solvents:

- ⇒ **Read the label and material safety data sheet (MSDS)** whenever you work with a new solvent, and follow all safety and health directions.
- ⇒ **Make sure there is adequate ventilation** to remove hazardous vapors.
- ⇒ **Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**, which may include chemical-resistant gloves (which should be changed frequently), eye protection, face shield, protective clothing, and in some cases, respirators.
- ⇒ **Use fluids sparingly** and keep containers sealed when not in use.
- ⇒ **Dispose of used solvent properly**—it's a hazardous waste and must be recycled or disposed of according to government regulations and company rules.
- ⇒ **Remove PPE and protective clothing carefully** to avoid getting solvents on your skin.
- ⇒ **Wash hands and face** with soap and water after removing PPE and work clothes.
- ⇒ **Wash immediately** if you get solvent on your skin.
- ⇒ **Flush with water** for at least 15 minutes, and see the doctor if you get solvent in your eyes.



Eye safety: important in every profession.

**Riddle of the Month**

What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, and has a bed but never sleeps?

**Answer on page 2 in Safety Bits & Pieces.**

# Safety Matters



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## Common Back Injuries

### How to prevent them on the job

Back injuries on the job are often triggered by sudden or incorrect movements. Here are several ways you could injure your back:

- ☒ **Strains** from overstretching, slouching, and improper lifting. Carrying excess weight, especially around your midsection increases your risk for strains.
- ☒ **Sprains** from sudden movements or twists that tear ligaments.
- ☒ **Overflexion**, or bending too far forward, which increases pressure on the cartilage in your back.
- ☒ **Overextension**, or bending too far backward, which increases pressure on the joints in your back.

All these injuries can be prevented by being aware of your back every time you move, using good body mechanics while you work, and keeping yourself in good shape so that your back doesn't become prone to injury.

#### What To Do:

- (1) Use proper lifting and carrying techniques.
- (2) Maintain a proper posture when you sit or stand.
- (3) Move your body as a single unit rather than twisting it.
- (4) Keep fit. As few as 10 minutes a day of simple exercises like crunches and knee bends (squats), which you can do at home without any equipment, can build up the muscles in your back, stomach, and legs.

## Back Pain Relief

### What to do for an aching back

Back injuries affect millions of Americans every year. In fact, workers lose an average of 7 workdays a year because of back injuries. If you ever experience a sudden, extreme pain in your back when you're at work, don't move. Ask a co-worker to notify your supervisor right away, and wait for medical help. Some back injuries can be very serious.

Much back pain, however, can be relieved with home remedies, such as:

- **Cold packs**, which can be applied for 15 to 20 minutes for the first 24 to 48 hours after the injury to reduce inflammation.
- **Heating pads**, which can be used for symptoms after 48 hours. Remember, first cold, then heat for back pain.
- **Over-the-counter pain relievers**, which can be used for a few days until symptoms subside.

The other essential treatment for back pain is rest to give it time to heal.

- Use a firm mattress and neck pillow.
- Put a pillow between your bent knees if you lie on your side.
- Put a pillow under your knees if you lie on your back.
- Get up and move around a little every half hour.

**NOTE:** If symptoms persist beyond a few days, see your doctor.

## Safety Bits & Pieces

### HOME SECURITY WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

When you go away on vacation, you want to be sure that you don't come home to an unpleasant surprise like a break-in or a home destroyed by fire. Before you leave:

- 🔒 **Lock all doors and windows.** All it takes is one unlatched window or door.
- 🔒 **Check the kitchen.** Turn off the stove and unplug appliances.
- 🔒 **Unplug TVs** and turn off computers.
- 🔒 **Shut off your water heater.**
- 🔒 **Put flammables (like gasoline for your mower) outside,** as far as possible from your house and neighboring homes.
- 🔒 **Don't hide keys outside.** If you normally do, take them with you.
- 🔒 **Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail** and check the house every few days.
- 🔒 **Stop newspaper deliveries.**
- 🔒 **Leave curtains and shades in normal positions,** and use a timer to turn lights on and off.
- 🔒 **Cut your lawn,** and arrange to have it cut again if you're away on a long vacation.
- 🔒 **Leave your second vehicle parked in the driveway** if you have one.

### HANDLING ITEMS IN HIGH PLACES

Getting a box down from a high shelf may not seem like a safety issue, but if you don't do it properly, you could end up with a sore back or some other injury. Here's how to move things *safely* from high places:

- 🔧 Use a stool or platform instead of a ladder.
- 🔧 Push up on the load to check how heavy and stable it is.
- 🔧 See if you can break it down into smaller pieces.
- 🔧 Get help if you think you might need it.
- 🔧 Slide the load toward you, grip, then slide it down.

### DON'T TAKE SAFETY FOR GRANTED

Did you know that one of the personality factors associated with the tendency to have repeat accidents is overconfidence? Accident-prone people assume they can handle all problems. Such overconfidence often leads to taking risks, which are followed by frequent accidents and injuries.

Don't take anything for granted when it comes to safety on the job. Always check and double check.

### Riddle of the Month Answer:

A River!

# Emergency Preparations

## Use this checklist

Everyone needs to know how to act quickly and effectively in a workplace emergency such as a fire, chemical spill, accident, or other incident. Do you know exactly what to do if an emergency occurs in the next 5 minutes?

- |   | YES                      | NO                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Do you know how to report an emergency?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Would you recognize the sound of the emergency alarm?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know the quickest and safest way out of the building from your work area?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you have an alternate route in case this primary route is blocked by fire or smoke?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know the location of emergency exits in other parts of the workplace near break rooms, locker room, and restrooms?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know your responsibilities for shutting down equipment, operations, or systems?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know where to find first-aid supplies and fire extinguishers?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • If you've been assigned emergency response responsibilities, such as helping co-workers evacuate, do you know how to do so? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you participate in all emergency drills?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know where to report once safely outside the building?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If there's anything you don't know, find out now!

### Safety Tip of the Month

According to the Tire Industry Safety Council, when the tread on your tire is worn down to one-sixteenth of an inch, the tire must be replaced. Today's tires have built-in tread-wear indicators or "wear bars," that look like narrow strips of smooth rubber across the tread and show up on the tire when the point of wear is reached. When you see them, you are in the danger zone; replace the tire.

### Quotation of the Month

"When you get in a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

**Harriet Beecher Stowe**

### On the Lighter Side

A man tried to sell his dog to a neighbor. "This is a talking dog," said the man, "and he's yours for five bucks."

"I don't believe you," said the neighbor. "There's no such thing as a talking dog."

Just then the dog looked up sadly and said: "Please buy me, sir. This man has been cruel to me. He never takes me for a walk, he buys me the cheapest dog food and he makes me sleep in the garage. He doesn't realize what a special dog I am. I swam the Atlantic two years ago and went to the North Pole the year before that."

"You're right!" said the neighbor. "This dog can talk. So why are you selling him so cheap?"

The owner replied: "I'm sick of his lies!!"

### Storm Watch

Consider the following storm watch terms and information:

#### Thunderstorms

⚡ *Severe thunderstorm:* Frequent lightning, 50 mph or higher wind, possible hail and/or heavy rain

⚡ *Severe thunderstorm watch:* Frequent lightning, 75 mph or higher wind, hail, possible tornado

⚡ *For lightning:*

— Stay indoors, away from open doors, windows, and water sources.

— If outdoors, crouch on low ground or among low trees, away from a lone large tree, open water, or metal.

#### Tornadoes

⚡ *Tornado watch:* Tornado is coming

⚡ *Tornado warning:* Tornado is almost here

— Go to interior room, closet, or basement without windows.

— Stay away from doors and windows.

— Crouch and cover head with arms.

— If outdoors, find a depression such as a ditch or culvert to hide in. Lie flat to make as small a target as possible.

— If in a vehicle, don't try to outrun the storm. Get out and lie flat in the nearest depression with your hands shielding your head.

### Safety Tidbit

As long as lightning doesn't cross the heart or spine, a person hit by it will usually survive.