

*“Our Work Shows Pride, With Safety As Our Guide”*

## STRAINS AND SPRAINS STILL LEADING CAUSE OF WORKPLACE INJURIES

The most recent workplace injury statistics from the National Safety Council shows that strains and sprains are still the leading cause of nonfatal injuries in American workplaces. These types of injuries accounted for 4 out of 10 occupational injuries and illnesses in the United States in 2004, so says the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of those injuries were the result of overexertion or falls. This information came from an article in the March issue of *Safety+Health* magazine and it fits our injury trends perfectly.

Strains and sprains are traumatic injuries to muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints usually caused by sudden wrenching, twisting, stretching or ripping. Can you think of actions that you take during your work day that might fall into the area of “sudden wrenching, twisting, stretching, or ripping? To help you answer that question, consider this. Very few of us are truly physically active during our work day. Most of the heavy physical responsibilities of our tasks have been taken over by machines. But there are physically demanding activities that we are expected to do from time to time. That is where the problems arise. We tend to not be very physically fit, but yet are required to do physically demanding tasks on a infrequent basis.

During the drivers meeting in Indianapolis this spring, a physical therapist made a presentation on warm-up exercises. A few stretching exercises performed at various times during the day has been proven to reduce the number of back strains that occur in the work place. We don't laugh near as hard as we used to when it is mentioned that we should be doing warm-up and stretching exercises on a daily basis.

Most of the participants in the meeting made positive comments the stretching exercises that were provided. I think you will be hearing more about this in the future. I will try to provide some of information in the forum in the next few months.

In the mean time here are a few tips to help minimize the possibility of you suffering a strain or sprain:

- Use proper lifting techniques such as sizing up the load, ensuring that you have solid footing, bend the knees while keeping the back straight, avoid twisting while lifting and carrying, keep the load as close as possible to the body, bend the knees to put the load down (and keep the back straight).
  - Avoid yanking on objects. Use a rubber mallet to loosen items that are stuck.
  - Use a mechanical helper whenever possible. Get a co-workers help.
  - Don't, I repeat, DO NOT jump off of equipment. Always maintain three points of contact when climbing. Even if it is just off of the step of your truck.
  - Plan your path! Look at what is or could be a tripping hazard in your travelway. Look at the ground conditions before you step off of equipment.
- We do not work in the best of conditions some times.



When this occurs it is even more important to:

- Stop — take a moment to survey the situation
- Look — identify the potential hazards
- Analyze — try to imagine what could go wrong
- Manage — take the action necessary to avoid the hazard

**SLAM** the risks!

### For What It Is Worth! Wife vs. Husband — Who Does What—

A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning. The wife said, “You should do it, because you get up first, and then we don't have to wait as long to get our coffee.” The husband says, “you are in charge of cooking around here and you should do it, because that is your job, and I can just wait for my coffee.” The wife replies, “No, you should do it, and besides, it is in the Bible that the man should do the coffee.” The husband replies, “I can't believe that! Show me.” So she fetches the Bible, and opens the New Testament and showed him at the top of several pages, that it indeed says.....”HEBREWS”

