PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

While no approach has been found for totally eliminating back injuries, many injuries could be avoided if the following guidelines were followed:

» Stack heavier items on lower shelves.
» Stack items used most frequently at a convenient waist level.
» Use a stool or ladder to access items on shelves. Do not stand on chairs or boxes that might tip over.
» Lighten the load to be lifted. Purchase smaller and therefore lighter cartons of stock.
» Ask for help if the load is heavy.
» Use handrails if traveling stairs, avoid undue speed and carry only items that you can safely see over.
» Limit lifting by hand. Use hand carts or any available mechanical equipment such as forklifts or pallet jacks to help with lifting.

Use proper lifting techniques:

» Before lifting size up the load. Push the load lightly with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves. This tells you how heavy it is.
» Warm up. Stretch your legs and your back before lifting anything.

» Make sure the weight is balanced and packed so it won’t move around.
» Wear gloves to prevent exposure to nails and slivers.
» Be sure to have a tight grip on the object before you lift it. Handles applied to the object may help you lift it safely.
» Bring the load as close to you as possible before lifting. Avoid reaching across something to lift a load. This moves the load away from the body and increases your chance of injury.
» Lift with your legs, not your back.
» Keep your head up, your back straight. Keep the load directly in front of your body. Shift your feet to turn; don’t twist your body.
» Perform lifts at waist height, with the elbows in close to the body.
» Try to carry the load in the space between your shoulder and your waist.
» Use your leg muscles to comfortably lower the load by bending your knees.
» Make certain your fingers and toes are clear before setting the load down.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, sprains and strains, most often involving the back, are one of the most common workplace injuries.

For more information about American Family’s Safety Consulting Services, visit www.amfam.com

DISCLAIMER
The recommendations printed here follow generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations does not guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, or federal, state or local regulations regarding safety or fire. Compliance does not ensure the absolute safety of you, your operations or place of business.