

THE

CONNECTION

MAY 2004

Lift With Your Head, Not With Your Back

When it comes to lifting, you can't be too careful. All it takes to injure your back and suffer weeks or months of pain is one wrong move. So strain your brain instead of your back and think before you lift.

k Size up the Load. Think about how you're going to handle it. Is it too heavy? Will you need help? Are there any rough edges, nails, or other hazards? Do you need gloves to lift this load safely?

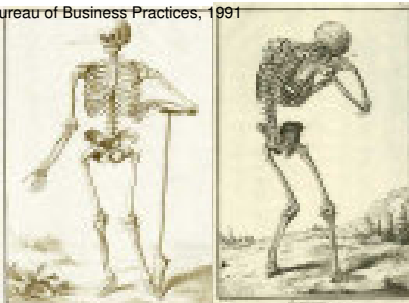
k Stand close to the load with feet wide apart. A wide stance allows your body to remain balanced as you lift.

k Squat down, bending at the hips and knees. This lets your legs carry the weight, not your back. That's why it's so important never to bend at the waist with your legs straight when you're lifting something. Even with a light load, this is inviting an injury.

k As you grip the load, arch your lower back inward by pulling your shoulders back and sticking out your chest. That's the way weightlifters do it. And they lift hundred of pounds, without injuring themselves.

k Keep the load close to your body while you lift. The closer the load is to your body, the less pressure it exerts on your back.

Bureau of Business Practices, 1991



Signs of Safety

Signs are a way of life in our society. Highway signs tell us how to find the place we want to visit. Other signs point out where to be seated in theaters, how to find offices within buildings, and how to find our way out again. Signs at the worksite are also instructional - they warn us about hazards we should avoid in order to save us from job injuries.

One of the most important signs in industry and construction reads **DANGER - HIGH VOLTAGE**. This usually means that the voltage is more than 600 volts, which OSHA terms nominal, but this is more than enough volts to cause injury. When we speak of amperes (amps), the numbers are considerably lower - as few as 20 amps can kill. Check your worksite to make sure that signs are posted when there's high voltage that endangers workers.

Guideposts to Safety

HARD HAT AREA means exactly what it says and requires that workers protect their heads. **EYE PROTECTION REQUIRED** is seen in many industrial work locations. Occasionally you will see **HEARING PROTECTION REQUIRED** in areas where exposure to the noise level is harmful.

Almost all workers are familiar with **FOOT PROTECTION REQUIRED** because industry and construction have discovered that both feet and downtime can be saved when workers are properly protecting their feet on the job, and aren't in a doctor's office.

One sign that's often overlooked says **NOT AN EXIT**. In an emergency, people will run for the first door, but sometimes this leads to a boiler room or a closet and provides no means of escaping a fire or other critical situations. Therefore, you must mark true exits to allow people to leave safely and quickly in an emergency.

Check the Batteries

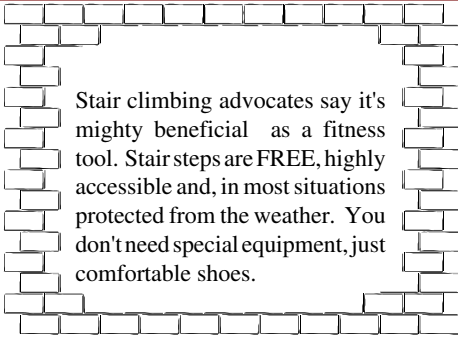
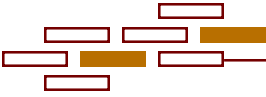
EXIT signs should have a reliable light source, according to OSHA. This means that signs should be battery powered so that they remain lighted even if the electrical power fails.

Signs that begin with **DANGER** mean that you must do what they say. The word "danger" is usually printed in red or printed on a red background. **CAUTION** means that you should obey the sign. This sign is supposed to be yellow in color. In an industrial setting, informational signs are in green and normally denote the location of a stretcher or a first-aid station.

OBEY SIGNS, NOT IMPULSE

The most "tested" sign of all time is the one lettered **WET PAINT**. This warning often prompts some people to test the paint to find out if the surface had dried. Hopefully, these people believe other signs that warn them **DO NOT WATCH WELDER; STEPS; and SLIPPERY WHEN WET**.

Sometimes construction progresses in such a manner that the signs warning the public that workers are near may need to be moved several times during a normal shift. **FLAGGER AHEAD** should be posted - more than once, ideally - anytime workers are assigned to control traffic. Motorists are often inattentive and should be given a double chance to see your signs. If you are working after sundown, you need numerous signs



(signs of safety cont.)

equipped with lights and blinders and eye-catching reflective cones to prevent motorists from running off the road or striking workers. When in doubt, install additional signs and cones - a much cheaper step than fighting a court battle with someone who claims your company's unmarked worksite caused his or her accident.

Remember, all warning signs mean something - unless someone fails to remove them when their use has ended. So, check them often and remind your workers to take warning signs to heart. Signs are often taken for granted and forgotten; therefore, a reminder is not out of order.



We welcome your comments and suggestions about the Connection. To submit articles and/or topic ideas, please call: (269) 629-9708 or send to P.O. Box 460, Richland, Mi 49083. Also visit our website at: www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com

Basic Steps to Safe Mowing

As the weather warms each spring and grass emerges from melting snow, millions of people add lawn and garden care to their list of chores. Gas powered riding mowers are perfect timesavers for keeping your surroundings neat and green. But before you bring out your riding mower this year or use any outdoor power equipment read the tips below to ensure you're practicing safe operating habits. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute offers the following seven steps to safe mowing.

1. *Know how to operate the equipment.* Read the operator's manual before using your mower or any other power equipment. Know where the controls are and what they do. Pay special attention to any safety instructions that the manufacturer provides.

2. *Dress properly for the job.* Wear long pants, close-fitting clothes, sturdy shoes, and safety glasses. Don't wear anything that could get caught in moving parts.

3. *Handle gas carefully.* Fill up before you start, while the engine is still cold. Fill gasoline containers and fuel tanks only three fourths full, so that tanks don't overflow from expansion that can result from temperature changes. To avoid spills, use a funnel or a nonspill nozzle, and take your time.

When fuel cans or power equipment are not in use, tighten caps to prevent evaporation. Store fuel cans in a cool place out of direct sunlight. Finally, make sure gas and oil caps are on tightly when equipment is tipped over for routine maintenance.

4. *Clear the area before you start.* Pick up rocks, twigs, or anything that could be thrown by mowing equipment. Before operating in reverse, look behind and down for small children. Use extra care when approaching

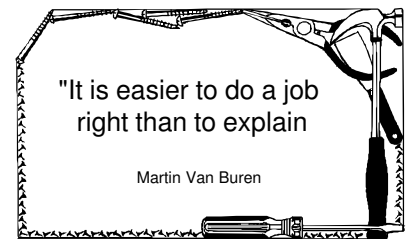
corners, shrubs, and trees.

5. *Keep children and pets away from the area until you're finished.* Never allow children to operate a mower, and never carry children as passengers on a riding mower-riding mowers are designed for one operator only. Turn off the mower if children enter the area.

6. *Operate equipment carefully and follow recommended procedures.* Always turn off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before attempting to unclog or work on outdoor power equipment. If you must leave the equipment unattended, turn off the engine and remove the key.

7. *Keep hands and feet away from moving parts.* Never work on equipment while it's running, and never remove or tamper with safety devices and labels.

Bureau of Business Practice 1999



The Whole Nine Yards

Many terms in common use today come straight from the construction industry. A good example is "the whole nine yards." Most people assume it comes from football - but that doesn't make a lot of sense, does it? The whole nine yards? Talk about lowered expectations! No, the term came into general use as a result of the trusty ready-mix concrete truck. Until recently the standard truck carried a maximum capacity of 80,000 pounds -

