

THE

# CONNECTION

AUGUST 2005

## STORAGE AREA SAFETY

### Aisles and Passageways.

Permanent aisles should be clearly marked using a color that contrasts with the floor. Check for uneven or warped flooring, deteriorating concrete, and holes that might trap the unwary. Are they clear of obstructions that hamper traffic or create a tripping hazard?

**Pallets and Racks.** Are they in good shape? Pallets should have no broken slats or protruding nails. Racks should be plumb and configured so that items cannot fall from heights on people below. Corners should be protected from forklift damage. Inspect all racks for stability, using cross bracing and lagging when necessary.

**Sprinkler Systems.** There should be adequate space between the top of stored items and sprinkler heads to allow effective operation. Make sure that combustible materials are never stored above the effective spray area. Be certain that there is adequate room below piping system for forklifts to work safely.

**Signage.** Traffic directional signs are needed in storage facilities where racks and high floor stacks obscure the sight line of forklift operators and pedestrians. Intersection warning signs and mirrors are called for. More diligence is needed when posting signs to mark fire extinguisher and standpipe locations. Floor load ratings need to be posted in mezzanine storage areas and where there is storage above occupied areas.

# THE SPINE

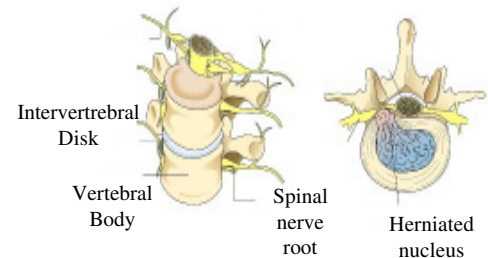
## Intervertebral Disks

Disks are thick pads of cartilage that separate adjacent vertebrae. Disks serve as shock absorbers, and you'd better take good care of them. Unlike the shock absorbers in a car, these cannot be discarded and replaced.

Each disk is made up of two parts: a gel center called the nucleus, and an outer gristly, interwoven fibrocartilage called the annulus fibrosis. The inside of the disk is like a jelly donut, while the outer disk resembles the rings of a tree.

It is through the jelly-filled nucleus and bony plates of the vertebrae that the disk acquires nourishment. Constituting about a third of the length of your spine, the intervertebral disks constitute the largest organ in the body without its own blood supply. Like a sea predator, it's completely dependent on a spongylike motion to attract nutrients from adjacent tissue. The disks receive their blood supply through movement as they soak up nutrients.

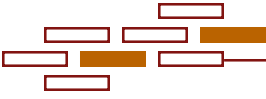
When at rest, the disk expands, soaking up fluid. This increases the length of the spine as much as one inch overnight. But wake up and begin weight-bearing activity such as walking, and the fluid compresses back into the adjacent soft tissue and vertebrae. When inhibited through repetitive movement, injury, or poor posture, this mechanism and the disks become thinner and prone to injury. This can ultimately lead to degenerative disk disease.



## Ligaments

Ligaments are strong fibrous bands that bind the skeleton together. The ligaments of the spine hold the vertebral bones together, stabilize the spine, and protect the disks. The two major ligaments are the anterior longitudinal ligament and the posterior longitudinal ligament. These continuous bands run from the top to the bottom of the spine along the vertebral bodies, providing a structure to prevent excessive movement of the vertebral bones. This is essential, considering that the major nerves of the body run through the spine. The ligamental structure is powerful, but in a weakened or continually stressed state, it cannot support the spine.





### NOW HEAR THIS

Too much noise can cause permanent hearing loss. It develops gradually and without pain, but noise induced hearing loss cannot be reversed.



You can halt it, though, if you protect your ears from further exposure. If your hearing is starting to fade, do something about it now so it does not get worse. And if your hearing hasn't been damaged, keep it that way.

Two types of noise can damage the hearing. One is a sudden loud noise, such as an explosion or gunshot. Permanent hearing loss can happen instantly.


More common, though, is gradual damage from noise. Conveyors, air tools and heavy equipment are among the countless sources of workplace noise.


If the noise problem can't be corrected by measures such as sound insulation and machinery maintenance, then you have to wear hearing protection. The protection you choose will depend on your work situation. You may need disposable foam earplugs or molded plastic canal caps. Or earmuffs may be required.


There's no substitute for a real hearing test, but take this quiz to learn if your hearing is in jeopardy:


-  Does it seem as though everyone mumbles and you often have to ask people to repeat themselves?
-  Do you often misunderstand what others say?


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](http://www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com)


 Do you have trouble picking out sounds from a noisy background? For example, is it hard to follow what one person is saying in a room where others are talking?

 Do others complain that you play the television or talk too loudly?

 Is it harder for you to hear things when you first leave work, with your hearing returning to normal a few hours later?

 Is it difficult for you to hear on the telephone?

 Do you have trouble hearing certain tones, such as high notes in music or a high-pitched voice?

 Do you get confused about where a sound is coming from?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be developing hearing loss. Hearing protection will help prevent further damage.

But hearing protection only works if you use it. The inconvenience of wearing earplugs or earmuffs temporarily is nothing compared to the inability to hear for the rest of your life.

Safety Talks! For Construction

## Grilling Safety

If used properly, cooking with a portable grill can be a wonderful experience, providing users with many great memories. But when used carelessly, grilling can be not only dangerous for the chef, but all those near the grill. The following are tips to help create a memorable grilling experience and ensure many more to come.

Designate the grilling area a "no play zone," keeping kids and pets away until grill equipment is completely cool.

Only use starter fluid made for barbecue grills when starting a fire in a charcoal grill.

Never bring a barbecue grill indoors, or into any unventilated space. This is both a fire and carbon monoxide poisoning hazard.

To prevent a build-up of gas, always keep the lid open when lighting the grill.

If the burner does not light the first time, turn the gas off, open the lid, and let the burner sit for five minutes before trying again.

Make sure no loose clothing or hair is over the grill when lighting the burner or when cooking.

A blue flame with little or no yellow flame provides the best heat. To achieve the desired flame, adjust the air damper on the back of the burner.

Do not use the grill indoors and make sure it is at least 10 feet from the nearest building.

Keep the burner away from any dry vegetation when in use.

Do not over fill propane tanks. For propane tanks to work properly, they must have enough room inside for the liquid to expand.

When storing a propane tank use extreme caution. Never store tank indoors when it is full. Never store an unused tank near a grill being used. You should always store tanks in an upright position.

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### Construction Safety

As a construction worker, you are part of a challenging industry and part of a unique team.

While working, your fellow construction workers, safety will also depend on you.

Remember, the SAFE way is always the BEST way.