



TALK LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

This is background information ONLY. Be sure to customize your talk to your operation and facilities.

- ✓ Print copies of this sheet for yourself and each of the participants.
- ✓ Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet at a location that is appropriate to the topic. Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible.
- ✓ Be open to questions.
- ✓ Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- ✓ Fill in your operation name, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- ✓ File your sheet in your worker training records to document the training experience.

WORK ACTIVITY

Farming can be very physically demanding work. Statistics Canada indicates that approximately 15 per cent of agricultural-related injuries are back injuries—significantly higher than the national average. The most common cause of back injury is improper lifting, followed by poor posture, overexertion, and slips and falls. Using proper lifting techniques can significantly reduce the risk of back injuries.

BACKGROUND

The back has four natural curves at the neck, middle back, lower back and tailbone which support your weight and absorb stress. The spine contains 24 hard bones called vertebrae which are separated by cushions called discs that absorb shock when you move. Fluid inside the discs allows you to move freely, however too much of the wrong type of movement can cause abnormal wear and tear, leading to back injuries. Symptoms of back injuries may include: numbness, tingling or burning into the legs; limited ability to sit or stand; pain, tightness or stiffness; decreased range of motion; and spasms.

Key Points

We have Standard Operating Practices for lifting safely on our farm. If you don't remember them, review them—you can find them:

Before lifting, test the weight of the load. If it feels too heavy for you to move by yourself then:

- Ask for help or reschedule the task for a time when help is available;
- Make into smaller loads; or,
- Use a mechanical aid such as a dolly, hoist or forklift.

General standards for safe lifting limits are 25 kg for males and 15 kg for females.

It is your legal right to refuse to lift anything that you feel may be a danger to you.

What are some examples of heavy lifting on our farm?

Always use the proper lifting technique as follows.

Plan before you lift. Know where you are going and clear a path.

Warm-up your muscles with gentle stretches before you lift.

Face the direction you need to move.

SPONSORED BY



CAUTION

Back belts ARE NOT considered personal protective equipment. Back belts were designed for medical rehabilitation purposes and have been proven NOT to reduce the risk of lower-back injury.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES / CONTACTS

In case of incident or injury, call 911 or local emergency services, then me / your supervisor.

MORE RESOURCES

Watch your Back: Back Health in the Workplace, by WorkSafe BC available at: <http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/Ergonomics/BackAtWork-Resources.asp>.

ThinkBack, by Dr. Paul Schwann, Applied Health and Research Centre and Farm Credit Canada, available at: <http://thinkback.ca/en/index.html>.

Take a wide stance, with the load between your knees if possible.

Hold the load close to your body, ensure you have a solid grip and move smoothly, without jerking.

Bend your knees, NOT at the waist.

NEVER try to catch a falling load.

Keep your back as straight as is comfortable. A rounded back increases the risk of injury.

Keep your head up. The more vertical your posture, the lower your risk of injury.

Breathe out as you begin to lift. This increases tension in your abdominal muscles. Do not hold your breath during a lift as this increases pressure in the abdomen.

Keep the load between shoulder and knee height.

Always keep your shoulders in line with your feet. Twisting significantly increases the risk of injury. Never twist while lifting or carrying anything—even light objects.

Proper lowering is as important as proper lifting. Plan to set the load on a raised platform or cart, if possible. Bend the knees, keep the back straight and breathe out as you begin to lower.

Rest to recover your strength, especially between repeated and long lifts.

COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS

(Use extra pages to write further comments or suggestions)

Operation Name _____

Location _____

Meeting Leader _____

Date _____

TOOLBOX TALK PARTICIPANTS

Print name _____

Signature _____



CanadaFarmSafe
SécuriFermeCanada

This Producer Tool was developed by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). Conducting regular Toolbox Talks, or safety meetings, with farm workers is one component of establishing a comprehensive farm safety plan as outlined in the Canada FarmSafe Plan, CASA's business-risk management tool for health and safety on the farm. To download the core Canada FarmSafe Plan, visit www.casa-acsa.ca/CanadaFarmSafePlan, or contact CASA to learn more at 1-877-452-2272.

This Toolbox Talk was funded by exclusive corporate sponsor Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited. CASA is funded in part by *Growing Forward 2*, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, with support from the agricultural and corporate sectors.