The Mechanics of Lifting

How Your Back Works

The elements of your back...

- moveable bones (vertebrae)
- shock absorbers (discs) between the vertebrae
- ligaments and muscles that keep the back aligned in three balanced curves

Unsafe lifting... is any lifting that upsets your back's alignment, such as:

- bending at the waist to pick up or put down an object.
- twisting as you lift or put down an object.

Safe lifting... keeps your back in alignment. You do this by:

- bending your knees instead of your back.
- holding the load close to you.
- lifting straight up, then turning the whole body by moving one foot at a time.

Remember... Back injuries are the most common industrial injury.

Before you lift, ask yourself:

- Does it have to be lifted?
- If so, are there mechanical aids available?
- Can I lift it alone?
- Is it too big or awkward?
- Do I have a clear path and good footing?

When you lift safely, your legs do the work, not your back.