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## *Weekly Safety Tip*

*Life Is All About Choices!*<sup>®</sup>

February 2, 2015

### **SCI Safety Tip: Practical solutions to keep workers safe, comfortable, and productive**

*Source: <http://www.blr.com> (Part 1)*

*Date: January 30, 2015*



At your next safety meeting, ask how many employees are experiencing some sort of back pain or muscle ache at the moment. If your business is like most, expect to see plenty of hands in the air. Keep reading for essential facts about back safety and the risks of excessive standing.

Back pain costs employers and society billions of dollars each year. Like other types of worker discomfort, it is distracting and annoying. Back pain can make people depressed, angry, grumpy, and less likely to work safely.

According to the Texas Division of Workers' Compensation, backs are not all that resilient. Once the back has been injured, it will never be strong as it had been. For employers and safety professionals, the goal is to prevent injuries from occurring, not only among those who do heavy lifting, pushing, and pulling but also for desk jockeys and other more sedentary employees.

The key to avoiding injury is to maintain the body's neutral position, which is an S-shaped curve. The ideal posture is a straight line from the midline of the ears down to the shoulders, to the midline of the hips, knees, and ankles. This posture should be

***SCI Safety Slogan***

***Give Support and Back Safety!***

***James Lehrke-SCI***

maintained while sitting, standing, reaching, pushing, and even sleeping.

For many workers, keeping that neutral posture while sitting is a real challenge. Sitting increases weight on the spine, and slouching places additional pressure on the back. Here are a few tips for encouraging proper postures:

- Provide chairs with maximum adjustability.
- Encourage frequent microbreaks. For example, deliver a message in person rather than by text or e-mail, stretch at the desk, or walk up and down a flight of stairs.
- Provide adjustable work surfaces, especially if two or more employees share a workstation.
- Train your personnel to use their chairs and other equipment to their benefit. The most adjustable chair is of little use if it's not used properly.
- Encourage employees to arrange their work areas to avoid excessive reaching overhead or bending over. Place heavy, frequently used objects near waist height to reduce bending and twisting to reach them.

*Continued next week*

## SCI OSHA Compliance: When PPE is the only choice, make it the right choice

Source: <http://www.blr.com> (Part 2)

Date: January 10, 2014

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Ideally, a PPE program should involve workers at every step. And it should tap the expertise of knowledgeable vendors who offer a wide variety of gear, good customer service, favorable delivery times, and training assistance.

Once the selections are made, the information must be communicated and workers must be trained. According to Chubb Loss Control Services, "The biggest problem with PPE in the workplace is employees' failure to use it." Managers and supervisors can significantly impact compliance with PPE by continuously communicating and training. Employees need to know:

- The potential hazards;
- The purpose of PPE;
- Types of PPE;
- How to select, fit, use, and care for gear; *and*
- Job positions, duties, and areas in the workplace where PPE is required.

Workers need to be trained (1) before they are assigned to a PPE-required area, (2) when there are changes in their responsibilities, (3) when new hazards are introduced, and (4) when new PPE is introduced.

Finally, PPE must be properly maintained. Damaged gear can be unsafe and uncomfortable, which discourages employees from wearing or using it. In addition, damaged PPE may not provide the needed level of protection.

### **PPE? YES, SIR!**

The U.S. Army Material Command (AMC) buys and maintains basically everything the army needs to operate. The saying goes, "If a soldier shoots it, drives it, flies it, wears it, communicates with it, or eats it, AMC provides it." Headquartered in Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, the AMC has a primarily civilian workforce of 70,000 people in all 50 states and in 150 countries. They work with everything from airplane parts to chemical weapons, paint, food, and ammunition.

How do you safeguard this gigantic workforce, including making sure they have and use the right protective gear? Doyle Wooten is acting safety director for AMC safety. He says the command relies heavily on job hazard analyses (JHAs). Every job in the army has a series of tasks, standards, and conditions, and PPE (steel-toed boots, eyewear, hard hats, and protective coveralls) is considered part of the conditions. Like other safety-minded employers, the army prefers to engineer out hazards. Working without protective gear is more comfortable and can boost productivity.

Asked to share some of the AMC's best PPE strategies, Doyle lists the following:

- The Corpus Christi Army Depot (a Voluntary Protection Program Star site) has a PPE "store" where employees can see various types of safety gloves, hard hats, coveralls, and other items. Employees can try out items to help decide which they prefer to use.
- Safety managers welcome comments and suggestions about protective gear. If an employee needs something better or different, it will be provided.
- Even in the field (including in theaters of war), every effort is made to comply with rules about wearing and using PPE.
- If an employee is found in violation of PPE rules, an AMC safety manager will typically write a citation that notes the



**Quick Tips for Healthy Living**



**Track Success!**

You may have heard that if you burn 3,500 calories you'll lose one pound, or that losing weight is as simple as "calories in versus calories burned". But do you know how many calories are in the foods you're eating or how much you burn out for a walk?

If you're like most of us, logging all your calories can seem like an overwhelming task. But now there's a free online tool called [MyFitnessPal](#) that makes keeping track of your food choices and activity a breeze.

Available as both a website and mobile app for android and iPhone users, [MyFitnessPal](#) offers several key features:

**Food database:** The MyFitnessPal food database is huge and includes items from popular grocery chains and restaurants. You can search for the food by name, or scan the barcode of packaged food and the nutrition info will be added directly to your daily diary.

**Recipe builder:** The recipe builder allows you to calculate the nutrition content of dishes you make at home. All you need to do is enter in the ingredients and number of servings.

**Exercise diary:** MyFitnessPal's exercise calculators will quickly add the calories burned for all of your physical activity to your daily diary, all based on your own body stats.

**Progress trackers:** MyFitnessPal includes areas to enter your weight and body measurements and will show you a chart of your progress over the span of 1 to 3 months.

**Message boards, groups & blogs:** MyFitnessPal has a very active community of members on the message boards, groups, and blogs. It's a great place to ask questions, discuss experiences, and offer encouragement and support to other members.

**Other tools:** MyFitnessPal also has a BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) and BMI (Body Mass Index) calculator. The BMR calculator calculates the amount of calories your body burns every day regardless of your activity level. The BMI calculator helps you find a healthy weight range base on your height and weight. You can download the free app on [iTunes](#) or the [Google Play Store](#) or visit the [full MyFitnessPal site](#).

violated rules, such as army and/or OSHA regulations. (The army, like most federal agencies, can be cited but not fined by OSHA.)

- Army leaders visiting a worksite to conduct a walk-through or audit are outfitted in PPE just like the employees whose work they are reviewing.
- PPE is an ongoing topic for the army safety councils (safety committees). Members address near misses prevented by wearing the proper PPE, and the content of these discussions is shared throughout the Command.

**Protection in motion: CSX Corporation**

CSX is one of the nation's leading transportation suppliers. Its transportation network encompasses about 21,000 miles of track in 23 states, the District of Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

Barry Morton is the former head of employee safety and now serves as general manager of REDI—the CSX Railroad Education & Development Institute. Morton explains, "Virtually all of our operating department positions—conductors and engineers on the train as well as trackmen, carmen, and utility workers on the mechanical side—require some form of hand, eye, or hearing protection."

Like most employers, CSX works hard to ensure that employees comply with PPE rules, both those imposed by the company and by regulators, including OSHA. "My belief is that people have to be intrinsically motivated to use PPE," he explains. That means they need to go beyond compliance to understand the value of protection for its own sake.

PPE and other safety topics are addressed in mailings to employees' homes, another way to build intrinsic motivation. Adds Morton, "We look at safety as a personal, family issue. We want employees to understand that they need to wear their eye protection so that they can enjoy the baseball game or ballet recital their child is involved in. We tell them that their ability to live the life they want is affected by what they do at work *and* at home."

*Continued next week*



*What do you think?*

Send us an email at: [jlconnections@aol.com](mailto:jlconnections@aol.com)

See our bold new look

@ <http://www.safetyconnections.com/>

*In Loving Memory of Jessica Lehrke*

