



Training Solutions, Delivered!

# **HOSPITALITY OSHA 7: Back Injury Prevention**

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet  
& Quiz**

***This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.***

## **PREPARING FOR THE MEETING**

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

## 5077 HOSPITALITY OSHA 7: Back Injury Prevention FACT SHEET

**LENGTH: 10 MINUTES**

### **PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

There are many different safety considerations hospitality workers need to think about on their jobs every day. Housekeepers, kitchen staff and maintenance workers all face different hazards relating to their work; however, one safety concern that applies to everyone and that is safe lifting. No matter what their jobs are, associates need to learn safe lifting techniques and practice them every time they lift anything. This program stresses the importance of proper lifting and explains the various safe lifting techniques that will help employees avoid painful back injuries.

Topics include the basic safe lifting procedure, avoiding twisting and catching falling objects, lifting items over your head, protecting your back while making beds and using carts and the importance of always using safe lifting techniques.

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, the participant will be able to explain the following:

- Why preventing back injuries is so important and everyone's responsibility;
- How to perform the basic safe lifting procedure;
- Why we should get help when lifting awkward or heavy items;
- Why we should avoid twisting, overstretching and catching falling objects;
- How to protect our backs while making beds and maneuvering carts.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:**

#### **PREVENTING BACK INJURIES IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

- There are many different safety considerations you need to think about on your job every day. People who work in housekeeping have specific duties and responsibilities.
- The kitchen staff has their own set of rules and regulations relating to their work. Workers in the maintenance shop face entirely different hazards than those working in the laundry.
- There is, however, one safety concern that applies to everyone and that is safe lifting. Whether you work in housekeeping, the kitchen or maintenance, you need to learn safe lifting techniques and practice them every time you lift anything.
- It's vital to your own safety and health. Remember, the only person that can prevent back injuries is you. The property can provide you with training and information, but it's really up to you. After all, you're the one who does the lifting and only you can make sure you do it right.

#### **WHY SAFE LIFTING IS SO IMPORTANT**

- You might ask why safe lifting is so important. It's a common question and the answer is simple. Unsafe lifting causes back injuries, that's a fact that cannot be denied.
- You may have been lifting incorrectly for years, but it only takes one unsafe lift to seriously injure your back. A back injury can result in severe pain, time off from work, reduced pay and painful rehabilitation.
- You probably know someone who has severe back pain. Many back injuries are debilitating to the point of limiting one's ability to work or other major life functions.
  - The truth of the matter is that most of us don't think about our back, much less the health of our back until we feel pain there. Once the injury has occurred, it is too late to undo the act or acts that lead up to the injury. So, lift properly. It's the safe thing to do.

#### **THE BASIC SAFE LIFTING PROCEDURE**

- The basic rule for lifting safely is to always bend your legs, not your back. This one fact cannot be stressed enough. If you bend your back while lifting, you're asking for trouble.
- The basic safe lifting procedure is simple and easy to understand. To begin, place your feet close to the item you are going to lift. Squat down, close to the object, keeping your back in its natural curvature.

- Get a good grip on the object. Test the weight of the object to make sure you will be comfortable with the lift.
- Next, bring the item close to your body to reduce the stress caused by the 10 to one lever principle. Once you have the item close to your body, stand up keeping your back as straight as possible. That's the basic safe lifting technique and it does work.

### **GETTING HELP FOR HEAVY OR AWKWARD ITEMS**

- Remember, bend your legs, not your back and if the item is too heavy, or too awkward to lift by yourself, get some help. One person should be in charge during the team lift to make sure you lift the item in unison and keep both people safe.
- In a hotel environment you're not always just picking up a box. This is where your common sense and good judgment comes into play and that's exactly what you should do, being careful not to twist or stretch as you lift.
- If at any time you feel an item is too heavy to lift or move alone, ask for help. Don't try to lift it alone.

### **AVOIDING TWISTING & CATCHING FALLING OBJECTS**

- Twisting your back while lifting can also create back problems. You should never twist while lifting anything. This point is often overlooked because people are busy trying to get the job done and sometimes they forget about safety.
- Instead of twisting your back, pick the item up, pivot your feet and set the item down or rearrange the items to reduce the need to twist. This simple method can save you a lot of potential pain and agony.
- Another grave mistake that people make is to try to catch a falling object. If you think about it, it is our natural instinct to try to prevent something from falling to the ground.
- We should reset our mind from instinctual reaction to a thoughtful reaction so that in that split second, we judge whether to catch it or allow it to fall. A light box? Catch it. A heavier box? Let it fall.
- Your health is more valuable than anything inside that box. A knife. Of course, let it or any other sharp object drop and get out of the way.

### **OVERSTRETCHING & LIFTING ITEMS OVER YOUR HEAD**

- Don't overstretch your back. We realize that you must stretch to a certain degree to perform your job in an efficient manner, but there is no reason to overstretch.
- \* Stretching too far can damage muscles and stretch ligaments in your back. Use a long-handled tool or reposition your body to reduce stretching.
- If you have to lift something over your head, do so very carefully. Lift the item from the ground and set it on a shelf or other mid-level surface. Then, reposition your grip and carefully lift the item over your head.
- Shelves should be arranged with lighter items on top, heavier items in the middle and bulky items on the bottom. This allows the heavy items to be in your power zone when you lift.

### **PROTECTING YOUR BACK WHILE MAKING BEDS**

- Typically, housekeepers spend about one half of the workday making beds. If done improperly, you run a great risk of suffering a back injury.
- To keep yourself safe from injury while making beds, do not stretch or overreach. Instead, walk around the bed and be sure to bend your legs when you tuck in the sheets.
- Do not "throw" or "snap" the sheets or other bedding over the bed. Instead, place it on the bed and walk around the bed to get as close as possible to the work.
- Do not stoop or bend your back but instead, bend your knees and crouch briefly while pulling the corner of the bed sheet over the mattress.
- Also, bend your knees to minimize bending of your back as you lift the mattress corner and tuck in the top bed sheet or use a tool to assist in raising the mattress. It doesn't take any more time and it protects your back.

### **USING CARTS**

- Your cart is heavy, no doubt. You help by not overloading your cart in the first place, but it's easy to push and maneuver if you do it properly.
- Pulling a cart places undue stress on your back arms and shoulders. Always push the cart. It's easier to control and easier on your back.

## **ALWAYS USING SAFE LIFTING TECHNIQUES**

- The weight of an item is only part of the equation. Even light items need to be picked up using proper postures.
- Safe lifting techniques need to be used whenever you lift anything. Remember, get close to the item and bend your legs, keeping your back in its natural curvature, and then lift the item.
- If at any time you have a question about your ability to perform a lift safely, stop and ask your supervisor. They would rather show you the right way than lose a valuable associate.

## **SUMMARY**

- The point we want to stress most is personal responsibility. You, and nobody else, are responsible for the health and condition of your back.
- If you practice safe lifting techniques, it will greatly reduce your risk of injury and you'll be a healthier and more professional associate. Nobody else can do it for you.
- A healthy and pain free back is a luxury taken for granted by many individuals. Don't take your health for granted. Follow the safe lifting techniques outlined in this program and you'll be doing your part to prevent back injuries.
- Remember, bend your legs not your back; don't overstretch; avoid twisting while lifting; and, get help with heavy or awkward items.

## **HOSPITALITY OSHA 7: Back Injury Prevention**

### **ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ**

1. b
2. d
3. b
4. e
5. c
6. b
7. b
8. d
9. b
10. a

## HOSPITALITY OSHA 7: Back Injury Prevention

### REVIEW QUIZ

*The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. You have a greater risk of experiencing a back injury if you work in the maintenance department rather than housekeeping.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. Which of these can result from improper lifting techniques or poor work postures?
  - a. Severe pain
  - b. Time off from work
  - c. Reduced pay
  - d. All of the above
  - e. Answers a and b only
3. Back injuries are usually only temporary and cannot cause permanent disability.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. Which of these are common causes of back injuries?
  - a. Poor posture
  - b. Twisting while lifting
  - c. Holding items close while lifting
  - d. All of the above
  - e. Answers a and b only
5. If you are lifting something and it begins to fall, what should you do?
  - a. Catch it
  - b. Stop it from falling
  - c. Let it drop
  - d. Lean over to catch it
6. The lever principle means that the further an item is held away from your body, the less strain it places on your back.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. When lifting, it is important to bend your \_\_\_\_\_, not your \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Arms/back
  - b. Legs/back
  - c. Back/legs
  - d. Back/arms
8. In addition to unsafe lifting techniques, what else may cause a back injury?
  - a. Sitting
  - b. Stretching
  - c. Reaching
  - d. All of the above
  - e. Answers a and b only
9. The objects weight is the only thing to consider when deciding if you can lift an item safely.
  - a. True
  - b. False
10. If you have any questions about safe lifting techniques, you should ask your Supervisor.
  - a. True
  - b. False