

The back is one of the strongest anatomical structures of the body. Despite back pain being common and causing some people considerable pain, serious or permanent damage is rare. Heavy lifting, repetitive movements, and sitting at a desk all day can weaken the back.

Pain can occur anywhere along your spine from the neck down. The pain can arise from many structures in your back. Structures making up the back include the bones (vertebrae), the joints between the vertebrae, the discs that serve as cushions, the ligaments, the muscles, and the nerves.

### BACK PAIN

**A number of factors can contribute to back pain at work:**

- ✘ Force – Exerting too much force on your back by lifting and moving heavy objects can cause injury.
- ✘ Repetition – Repeating movements, especially those that involve twisting or rotating your spine, can cause injury.
- ✘ Inactivity – An inactive job or desk job can cause back pain, especially if you have poor posture or sit in a chair with inadequate back support.
- ✘ Other factors that contribute to back pain would include aging, poor physical condition or obesity.

### REPORTING

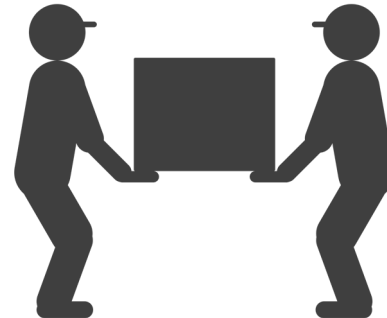
If you have injured your back and need treatment, visit your health care provider to diagnose and/or treat your injury.

Report your injury to your employer and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), even if you do not require immediate care. If your injury leads to complications and you failed to report it, your future benefits may be at risk.

### PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

**The following tips may prevent back injuries:**

- ✘ Think Twice Lift Once – Bend at your knees and lift with your legs. Keep feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly behind the other. Tighten your stomach and buttocks muscles. Hold object close to your body and do not twist when lifting. Make sure your route is clear.
- ✘ Use mechanical lifting aids where possible.
- ✘ Employ a team lift:



- ✘ Combine aerobic exercise, such as swimming or walking, with exercises that strengthen and stretch your back muscles and abdomen. Exercises that increase your balance and strength can also decrease your risk of falling and injuring your back.
- ✘ Eat a healthy diet – Make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D. These nutrients prevent osteoporosis.
- ✘ Pay attention to posture when standing or sitting. If you sit for a prolonged period, change your position, or periodically get up and walk around or stretch.

# Tool Box Talk

## How To Use This Resource

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks. Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.



**For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)**

**For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)**

## ABOUT THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

*The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.*