

Issue #2306
SUMMER 2023



METROPOLITAN EDUCATION DISTRICT

MetroED Employee Safety Newsletter

BACK SAFETY

Keep in mind that your back's major job is to carry your body. When you lift the wrong way, your back has to support you and whatever you are carrying. So the object of safe lifting is to protect your back by letting your legs, not your back, do the work.

Keep your back in mind as you plan and execute any task. And try to stay in good shape with a healthy diet and a regular program of exercise. You need your back to sit, to stand, to move. Do your best to protect it.

GENERAL HAZARDS

To understand why there are so many back injuries, it's useful to understand what's in your back to be injured.

Basically, the back holds up your entire body. The spinal column, which runs down your back, is an s-shaped stack of bones called vertebrae. These vertebrae are connected by ligaments and separated by soft discs that cushion and protect the bones. At the center of the spinal column is the spinal cord, and nerves from there run out to other parts of the body.

The back does its job with the help of muscles attached to the vertebrae. These muscles work with the stomach muscles to keep the spinal column in place and keep the back strong. When you experience back strain or pain, it's usually related to the muscles or ligaments. The pain results from overusing or stretching those muscles or moving them in ways they're not meant to move.

You can injure your back with one wrong move—the kind of thing that can happen shoveling dirt—or by a buildup of stress on weak muscles. Be aware of your body movements and don't overestimate your strength. If you think you'll need help, get it!

Your back is incredibly important. It supports your entire body, and you can't afford to damage it. Yet most people experience back pain at some time in their lives, and the back is the most likely part of the body to get injured on the job. Since many back injuries are serious and can leave you with lasting pain, it's very important to do everything you can to prevent them.

Improper lifting is the greatest single source of back injuries, so concentrate on doing it right.

- Use mechanical aids for lifting whenever possible.
- Break a load into its smallest possible parts before lifting.
- Don't overestimate your strength.
- Plan your route before you lift.
- Lift with knees bent and back straight so your legs not your back do the work.
- Move your feet to change direction; don't twist.

You need your back to sit, to stand, to move. Do your best to protect it and to stay healthy and flexible.

SLIP, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slips, trips and falls are the number 1 reasons for a work injury in the United States. Thousands of disabling injuries—and even deaths—occur each year as a result of slips, trips, and falls:

- From heights, on stairs, and on level ground

Pay Attention to Your Movements and Surroundings

- Focus on where you're going, what you're doing, and what lies ahead
- Expect the unexpected
- Make sure mats are laying flat on the floor and not rippled
- Take responsibility for fixing, removing, or avoiding hazards in your path
- Wear sturdy shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels
- Avoid baggy or loose pants you could trip over.
- Walk, don't run
- Wipe your feet when you come in from rain or damp grass
- Clean up spills
- Report or replace any burned out lights or inadequate lighting
- Watch out for floors that are uneven, have holes, etc.
- Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets, for balance
- Don't carry loads you can't see over
- Walk slowly on slippery surfaces. —Slide your feet and avoid sharp turns
- Sit in chairs with all four chair legs on the floor
- Make sure all wheels or casters are on the floor
- Never stand on a chair or table—take the time to get a step ladder



HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

With the mercury rising around the country, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) warns that heat-induced occupational illnesses, injuries, and reduced productivity can occur with excessive exposure to a hot work environment.

Heat-induced disorders include transient heat fatigue, heat rash, fainting, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Aside from these disorders, heat poses the threat of injuries because of accidents caused by slippery palms as a result of sweating, fogged-up safety glasses, and dizziness. Severe burns can also occur as a direct result of accidental contact with hot surfaces and steam.

NIOSH has assembled a number of references with information on heat-induced occupational illnesses, injuries, and reduced productivity, as well as methods that can be taken to reduce risk.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also provides helpful tips as to how individuals can avoid heat-related illness. That advice includes:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him or her how much you should drink while the weather is hot.
- Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar- these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Make sure shade is available.

The District is committed to protecting employees from the hazards of hot conditions and to preventing heat-related illnesses at the workplace. We will identify, evaluate, and control potential exposure of our employees to extreme temperature, humidity, and other heat-related factors.

The Plan Administrators is responsible for implementing the Heat Stress Prevention Program, monitoring work area heat conditions and for ensuring that employees are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress illnesses or injury and what to do if these occur.

Supervisors are responsible for encouraging employees to frequently consume water or other acceptable beverages to ensure hydration.

Employees are responsible for monitoring their own personal factors for heat-related illness including consumption of water or other acceptable beverages to ensure hydration.

HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

This Heat Illness Prevention Program describes controls and work practices to protect employees from heat stress while working in hot conditions (85 degrees+). The program can be found on the MetroED website in the Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). The IIPP plan is located in the Safety folder on the website. A hard copy is available at the M&O Department.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the foundation for accomplishing the District's maintenance and enhancement plans. The District is committed to the pursuit of least chemical pest management. However, the need for a chemical tool may be established by following procedures outlined in the district procedure for IPM. These procedures and the selection criteria are designed to safeguard the health and well-being of the district's students, staff and community members, as well as to maintain a safe school environment.

It is the policy of MetroED District that the least toxic pest management practices are the preferred method of managing pests and that the district, in order to reduce everyone's exposure to toxic pesticides, shall take the necessary steps pursuant to Food and Agriculture Code section 13180 to facilitate the adoption of the least toxic pest management practices at all sites.

The district's IPM program begins with education, habitat management, alteration of maintenance activities, physical, biological, and then chemical controls.

All employees that apply a pesticide, including disinfectant cleaners and wipes, must be trained and certified through the Department of Pest Management and Healthy Schools Act annually. Staff must NOT bring their own pest sprays or chemicals to schools. It is against the law!

The IPM plan is available to all employees on the district's website in the Safety folder.

MACHINE GUARDS

Moving machine parts have the potential to cause severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, amputations, burns, or blindness. Safeguards are essential for protecting workers from these preventable injuries. Any machine part, function, or process that may cause injury must be safeguarded. When the operation of a machine or accidental contact injure the operator or others in the vicinity, the hazards must be eliminated or controlled.

All equipment must have guards on them to prevent injury. School site equipment that should be inspected by you:

Paper cutters – must have safety guard in place to prevent amputation or injury.

Box cutters—must have the guard. If retractable, the blade should always been secured in the handle. The blade should never be exposed.

Fan – When the periphery of the blades of a fan is less than seven (7) feet above the floor or working level, the blades must be guarded. The guard must not have openings larger than one-half (½) inch. A fan should never be left running when not supervised.

Saws, conveyor belts, weed wackers - Tools with moving parts must have the guard in place. Employees should not have loose clothing, jewelry, long hair, etc. that could get pulled into the machine.

General Machine Safety Rules

- A machine designed for a fixed location must be securely anchored to prevent walking or moving.
- No equipment is to be left running while unattended.
- Any damage to the machines, tools, fixtures, etc. must be reported to a supervisor immediately.
- Machines shall be completely stopped and de-energized before attempting to clear jammed work or debris.

The Machinery and Machine Guard plan can be located on the MetroEd website in the Safety tab.