

FM SAFETY ALERT

LIFTING INJURIES

August 2009

“Back strain from lifting a full container of paper to recycle.” “After picking up a recycling barrel to empty, felt pain in right side.” These are some recent incidents that occurred to Buildings and Grounds employees on campus resulting in lost time injuries. Don’t think these types of injuries always happen to someone else. The following are some reminders to help prevent lift related injuries.

1. Before you make a lift:

- Always warm up your body before you lift any load. This is a good way to prevent muscle strains and pulls.
- Stretch your back with upward reaches and continue to loosen tight muscles with simple side and back bends.

2. Preparing for the lift:

- Check the weight and center of gravity of the load.
- If the load is heavy or bulky, seek a co-worker for assistance, break the load into smaller loads, or use a cart or other mechanical means.
- Ensure you have a clear path of travel with the load.

3. Making the lift:

- Face the load squarely and get as close to the load as possible.
- Balance yourself solidly, with your feet shoulder width apart.
- Keep your back as straight and upright as possible.
- Bend your knees. Grip the object firmly.
- Let your abdomen and legs make the lift.

4. Lifting pointers:

- To change direction while lifting or carrying a load, do not twist. Turn your entire body including your feet.
- When possible, push rather than pull a load.
- When the object is too heavy, admit it and get some help!

