AMG Preventing Employee Injuries
Every employee is responsible for wholehearted, genuine cooperation with all aspects of the safety program, including compliance with all rules and regulations, and for continuously practicing safety while performing his or her duties. Input from staff at all levels of the organization is essential to the success of the program.
Report Safety Issues Immediately

- If you discover a safety problem, report it immediately to the Safety Officer or to your supervisor. Every department is responsible for training their employees on department-specific hazards and safety issues. If you have a safety question, ask your supervisor about it.
Safety Management

In the healthcare environment, people’s lives depend on your safety awareness and compliance. You must be prepared to act with total safety in mind. Most injuries in the healthcare industry are associated with sprains and strains, especially injuries to the back.

Other injuries such as needle-sticks have the potential for serious illness. The risk of all types of injury can be dramatically reduced through proper training and safe work practices.
Safety Management

You should:

1. Get the training that you need to do your job safely.

2. Put your training into practice every day and keep alert for the unexpected.

3. Promote and support safety as you interact with co-workers.

4. Report hazards, accidents/incidents, or “near-miss” accidents promptly to your supervisor with your suggestions for corrections.
10 Fundamental Safety Rules

Most accidents can be avoided through adherence to some fundamental, common sense safety rules:

1. Report all potentially hazardous or unsafe conditions or acts to the Safety Officer immediately.

2. All foreign materials on floors should be removed or reported to Environmental Services to prevent injury to others.

3. All defective or damaged equipment should be reported to Maintenance/Plant Ops immediately.
4. Walk, DO NOT run! Keep to the right, using special caution at intersecting corridors.

5. Know the Hospital’s Fire Safety Plan and the location of fire alarms and extinguishers and how to use them.

6. Become familiar with the relevant work procedures and safe work practices.

7. If doors have glass inserts, be sure that the other side is clear before opening the door. If the other side is not clear, open the door slowly using the handle or push plate.
8. Report all injuries, however slight, to the supervisor and get first aid immediately.

9. Realize that horseplay and practical jokes often result in serious injury. The hospital is no place for such actions.

10. When in doubt about what should be done, ask the immediate supervisor.
Your back is made up of movable bones (vertebrae) and shock absorbers (discs) between each vertebra - Ligaments and muscles support these structures and help keep the back aligned in three balanced curves. Your back is aligned correctly when your ears, shoulders, and hips are in a straight line. When the three curves of your back are not in balance, there is a greater likelihood of back pain and injury.
Lifting Basics:

When you lift, it is important to keep your back in balance. If you bend at your waist and extend your upper body to lift an object, you upset your back's alignment and your center of balance. You force your spine to support the weight of your body and the weight of the object you are lifting. This situation is called “overload”. You can avoid overloading your back by using good lifting techniques. For example, when you bend at the knees and hug the object close to you as you lift, you keep your back in alignment and let the stronger muscles in your thighs do the actual “lifting”. Therefore, you do not have to extend your upper body and are able to maintain your center of balance.
The leading types of employee injury in the workplace are strains and sprains of the lower back. Incorrect lifting and moving patients, equipment, and materials increase the potential for injury. Most back problems are attributed to chronic injury or neglect rather than acute injury.

By following a few basic steps, you can reduce the potential for injury:

- Review work task. Inspect work areas. If you see any hazards that might cause injury, report them; and if possible, remove the hazard.
Use mechanical lifting devices. The potential for injury increases as the weight of the object increases. You cannot lift every load yourself and some loads are even too heavy or too awkward for two to handle. Carts, bins, hand trucks, and dollies can help to lift such loads. Pushcarts and bins are useful for light, awkward loads, while hand trucks and dollies aid in moving heavier, stackable material. When using mechanical aids, be sure that the load is secured in place before moving.
Body Mechanics

- When moving or lifting items: 
  - Grasp the load firmly 
  - Do not jerk the load 
  - Keep the item close to your body at waist height 
  - Bend your knees and hips 
  - Lift with your legs and not your back 
  - Maintain the 3 normal curves of your back 
  - Do not twist as you lift 
  - Tighten your abdominal muscles; this action helps support your back. Remember, NEVER twist while lifting—instead, move one foot at a time in the direction where you want to go and then turn with your leg muscles.

- Make sure adequate help is available to move awkward or heavy loads. Getting assistance can eliminate the threat of a serious injury.
Be in good physical condition by doing exercises that strengthen and stretch muscles that support the back’s three natural curves and enable you to use good body mechanics in performing your work. Whenever possible, push rather than pull large or heavy objects. You can push twice as much as you can pull without strain.

Reaching for supplies in high places can hurt if you reach too high or grab something that is too heavy. Be sure to reach only as high as you can without stretching and use a stool if necessary. Test the weight of the load before you actually lift it. Contract your stomach muscles to keep your back in neutral position and let the muscles in your legs and arms do most of the work.
Pushing and pulling can be hard on your back. Just as you should do while lifting, stay close to your load and hold your neutral back position to protect yourself. Tighten your stomach muscles when pushing. Push whenever you can—it’s much easier than pulling.
Needlestick and Sharps Injury Prevention

- Sharps include any instrument or object capable of breaking the skin: needles, scalpels, rotating instruments, broken glass, wires etc.
- Every sharp should be treated as a dangerous instrument capable of transmitting a bloodborne disease.
- To avoid being injured by a sharp:
  - Handle sharps as little as possible. Do not bend or break contaminated sharps.
  - Always direct the sharp away from yourself.
  - Be aware of others around you when you are holding sharps.
Needlestick and Sharps Injury Prevention

- Always use syringes and needles with safety devices. If safety devices are not available, notify your supervisor.
- Do not recap a needle; use the one handed scoop method.
- Take time to properly dispose of used sharps by immediately placing them in a sharps container, making sure that it is dropped into the container. When the sharps container is 3/4 full (reaching the fill line), remove the container and replace it with a new one.
- Be alert for sharps discarded in waste containers or linens, or sharps that are lying on the floor, beds, shelves or tables. Never reach inside a waste container or push a waste/trash bag down with your hands.
- Carry trash or laundry bag as if it had a needle in it.
Prevention of Falls:

Each year, hundreds of workers die and thousands are left disabled from falls on the job. It may come as a surprise that falls are the most common type of industrial accident. Yet using common safety sense and learning how to recognize and correct typical fall hazards in the work environment can prevent almost all falls.
Understanding Falls

Falls occur when you lose your balance and footing. Your center of gravity is displaced and there is nowhere to go but down. You may be thrown off balance by a slip on a wet floor or a trip over an electrical cord. Once you lose your balance and footing, a fall is inevitable.
One of the most common causes of office falls is tripping over an open desk or a file drawer. Bending while seated in an unstable chair and tripping over electrical cords or wires are other common hazards. Loose carpeting, objects stored in halls or walkways, and inadequate lighting are other hazards that invite accidental falls. Fortunately, all of these fall hazards are preventable.
The following can help you stop a fall before it happens:

- Look before you walk—make sure your pathway is clear.
- Close drawers after every use.
- Avoid bending, twisting, and leaning backwards while seated.
- Secure electrical cords and wires away from walkways.
- Always use an appropriate stepladder for overhead reaching.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- If you see an object on the floor, pick it up!
- Report loose carpeting or damaged flooring to maintenance immediately.
- Make sure that walkways are well lighted.
- Walk — DO NOT run!!
Ergonomics

- Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the people who work in them. The term encompasses knowledge about physical abilities and limitations, as well as other human characteristics that are relevant to job design. By taking this knowledge, you can theoretically design a workplace that is safe and efficient for workers.

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) are injuries and disorders to the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage and spinal discs. Exposure to physical work activities and conditions that involve risk factors may cause or contribute to MSDs. Injuries caused by slips, trips, falls, vehicle accidents, or similar mishaps do not usually fall into this category.
Musculoskeletal Disorders

- MSDs are caused by exposure to repetitive actions, forceful exertions, awkward postures, contact stress or vibration.
- Common symptoms include the following:
  - Painful joints
  - Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms or knees
  - Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet
  - Shooting or stabbing pain in arms or legs
  - Back or neck pain
  - Swelling or inflammation
  - Stiffness
  - Burning sensation
Musculoskeletal Disorders

As with any work related injury, it is essential that the employee report the injury to his/her supervisor as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken for treatment of the injury as well as possible engineering controls to help reduce the hazards. Physical changes may be required to reduce the MSD hazards. Examples include changing or redesigning workstations, tools, or equipment. Learning how to “work smart” and recognize symptoms before they become serious can prevent MSDs.
Tips to Prevent Injury

- Avoid repeating actions when possible. If several different movements are possible, rotate among them. Vary your posture and work position to reduce stress on your body.

- Try adjusting your work area so that you can keep your wrists straight while filing or performing other repetitive motions.

- If you work while seated, position your chair high enough so that your elbows are even with, or slightly higher than your hands.

- Take short breaks and gently stretch and shake out your hands once every hour.

- Pace yourself – although working at breakneck speed may get the job done faster, in the short-run, a repetitive motion injury could put you out of commission for weeks or longer.
Tips to Prevent Injury

- Limit how often you lift a patient.
- Limit twisting your body at the waist during a lift.
- Hold patients close to your body during a lift.
- Have more than one person involved in lifting a patient.
- Avoid prolonged forward bending (such as while caring for patients).
Electrical Safety

- Electric wiring, fixtures, equipment, and machinery can be hazardous. Primarily, they can cause fires and explosions. Wood, paper, and some chemicals can catch fire from a simple spark. In addition, electricity can burn, shock, or even kill you depending upon the strength of the electricity. When you are shocked, your muscles can contract violently, causing serious falls or 27 other accidents. Finally, when electric equipment is not turned off after use, the next person to use it may not be aware that the power is still on and they can become shocked or injured.
Important Rules for Electrical Safety

- Avoid using appliances touching metal while you are wet.
- Unplug equipment or appliances before cleaning, inspecting, repairing, or removing anything from them.
- Keep electrical equipment, machinery, and work areas clean. Oil, dust, waste, and water can be fire hazards around electricity.
- If you are not trained to work in high voltage areas, do not enter them—even in an emergency.
- Make sure that all electrical equipment is properly grounded.
- If someone has been shocked, separate the victim from the current before doing first aid if you can do so safely without injury to yourself. If not, call for help.
- Use “C” rated extinguishers for electrical fires. NEVER USE WATER!!!
Always Report Unsafe Conditions

- Report unsafe conditions, such as shocking, sparking, overheating, or smoking equipment. Any damaged outlets, switches, or extension cords should not be used and should be reported immediately.
Employee Health

- **Employee Injury** If you are injured on the job, report the injury to your supervisor and complete an Event Report in ActionCue.

- For minor injuries, needle sticks, and blood and body fluid exposures, you should report to Employee Health.

- The employee health nurse will facilitate staff members receiving appropriate treatment and follow-up.

- If a blood and body fluid exposure occurs, immediately wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. If eyes are involved, irrigate with copious amounts of water. If mouth is involved, rinse mouth with plain water or an appropriate antiseptic mouthwash, if available.

- Even if you decline medical treatment, you are still required to report the event to your supervisor or designee.