Sprain & Strain Injury Prevention (Safety Brief)

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PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Background

- Injuries from lifting, pushing, pulling, and similar work-related activities – and also from jumping out of trucks and heavy equipment – are among the most common and costly for municipal highway employees.
- Employees experience injuries to the back and major joints (primarily the shoulders, elbows, and knees) that can have significant impacts on the employee's long-term health and the employer's ability to provide adequate highway services. That's why preventing injuries should be a major goal for both the employee and employer

Talking Points for Training

A good way to start any training is to ask about possible sources of injury in your own shop and have a discussion about them, as well as some possible solutions. It is also helpful to discuss things that increase the potential for injury. Some of the following bullets might be good things to share:

- Strain and sprain injuries often occur from tasks or activities that involve the following:
    - Lifting awkwardly, twisting while lifting, or lifting something that is too heavy (e.g. over 50 lbs)

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    - Excessive reaching and pushing or pulling on an object, especially one that is overhead
    - Applying high force in any direction, or even when using a tool or lever. Use care when changing plow blades!
    - Repetitive tasks with modest weights that overly tire muscle groups
    - Lifting an object from ground level to a vehicle, or higher elevation, as well as placing heavy items on the floor from an elevated height
    - Climbing in and out of vehicles (especially when jumping off of steps)
- Ask: What are tasks that we do that have the above listed physical requirements? Make a short list and have the group think about ways to do these more safely. Consider team lifting, using mechanical assistive devices, using hoists, using rollers, etc.
- It is fair to remind employees that there are some physical demands in the job and that maintaining some measure of fitness not only helps them personally but also reduces the likelihood that they will be seriously injured.
- Sometimes, things will need to be lifted or moved manually. When the need arises, remind employees to use good lifting technique. Bend at the knees, keep the head focused straight ahead, and always try to keep the object as close to their body (spine) as possible.
- Remind employees to avoid shortcuts and instead use equipment to reduce their potential for injury.
- Maintain 3 points of contact when entering & exiting vehicles. Never Jump!

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer:	Training Date:
1.	9.
2.	10.

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3.	11.
4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

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