



“Safety & Compliance are Never a Compromise”

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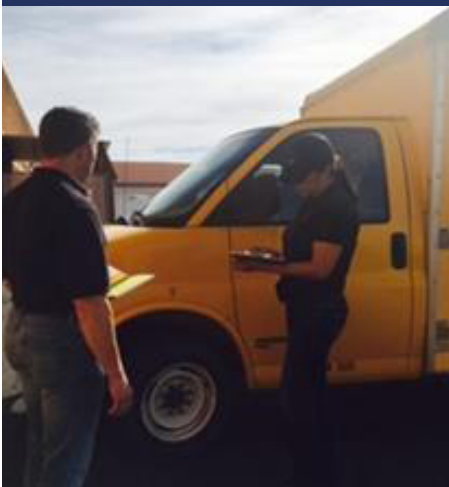
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Safe lifting practices: Preventing injury

Back problems are a common cause of lost work time for the professional driver.

Prolonged periods of sitting behind the wheel and lifting heavy objects contribute to back pain.

Many of these problems can be prevented by practicing proper lifting techniques, good posture, and engaging in a healthy lifestyle.

Proper lifting techniques

Sprains and strains are the most common causes of lower back pain. Lifting improperly can contribute to back pain and injury. Use of proper lifting techniques can help prevent back pain and injury.

Before the lift:

- Make sure you are wearing proper footwear and that your footing is solid;



- Stretch;
- Look out for slippery or uneven surfaces;
- Make sure your path of travel is safe; and
- Size up the load by carefully lifting one of the corners to test weight.

Use mechanical aids (carts, dollies, etc.) as needed, and ask for help if the load is too heavy.

When lifting:

- Place your feet apart and close to the object;
- Center yourself;
- Bend your knees;
- Never bend at the waist;
- Get a good handhold; and
- Lift straight up and smoothly.

Once you have made the lift, keep the load steady and close to your body. Never twist or turn your body and never carry a load above your head or at your side.

When setting the load down:

- Take your time;
- Bend your knees;
- Let your legs do the work;
- Keep your back upright and head up;

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- Tighten your abdominal muscles; and
- Change foot position to make body turns — do not twist your body.

Sitting, standing, sleeping

Good posture when both sitting and standing as well as good sleep habits can aid in preventing back pain and injury.

Proper sitting posture places your knees higher than your hips. Your hips should be at the rear of your chair or seat. Your lower back should not be overarched and your shoulders and upper back should not be rounded.

When standing, your ears, hips, and shoulders should be in a straight line.

The best sleeping position for back health is on your side with your knees bent. If you sleep on your back, place a pillow under your knees for support.

Change sleeping positions several times each night. Sleep on a mattress that supports your back and doesn't sag.

The power to prevent

Eighty percent of adults will experience low back pain in their lifetimes, according to the National Institutes of Health. In addition to repetitive motions, back pain is often caused by basic lifestyle factors that can often be prevented. Experts at Harvard Medical School offer the following suggestions for keeping back pain at bay:

- 1. Stay in shape.** Low-impact aerobic activities such as swimming, bicycling, or walking are ideal because they strengthen the back and abdominal muscles and also stimulate endorphins, which help kill pain.
- 2. Maintain a healthy weight.** People who are overweight carry more weight on their spine and are at a higher risk of straining muscles in their backs. Extra weight, especially in the stomach, can put extra strain on the back. Every



pound up front can put up to an extra ten pounds of strain on the back. To aid in maintaining a healthy weight, consume a variety of healthy foods including vegetables and fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy.

- 3. Don't smoke.** Aside from the countless other reasons not to smoke, scientists believe that nicotine hampers the flow of blood to the vertebrae and disks. In addition, smokers tend to lose bone faster than nonsmokers, putting them at a higher risk for pain.
- 4. Lighten your load.** A purse, briefcase, or backpack could be causing back pain. Minimizing the weight in any of these items may reduce or eliminate back pain.
- 5. Stretch.** Take breaks to stretch and short walks to loosen up.

Injuries

Many believe that a single event or injury causes back pain. In most cases, back pain is the result of repeated minor strains and/or poor habits.

The following are some of the most common problems that lead to back pain.

- Sprains and strains are the most common types of back injury. They can result from injury to muscles and ligaments that support the back.
- A ruptured or slipped disc occurs when the disc presses on a nerve.
- Chronic tension or stress can result in muscle spasms and backache.



To help alleviate these problems, if you are sitting for long periods of time, make sure you get out of your chair or seat from time to time, stretch and walk around.

If you are standing for long periods, make sure you periodically change foot position and avoid leaning to one side.

If the pain continues, seek professional assistance, as the pain could indicate a serious problem that requires medical attention.

Safety focus: Frost and changing temperatures

There is nothing like a crisp, clear winter morning. But that crisp, cool air can be a sign that frost has formed. Frost is the result of water vapor freezing into ice crystals on a cold surface, like a road. It usually happens on clear mornings instead of cloudy ones, because clouds tend to hold in heat. Frost can leave portions of roads unexpectedly slippery. When temperatures shift, you should be aware of frost potential.

Look for frost on:

- Bridges and overpasses – frost occurs because the bridge deck temperature is at or below the dew point and is below freezing.
- In shaded areas – frost occurs because the sun doesn't hit these areas and they stay colder longer.
- In low-lying areas – frost occurs because these areas can be damper from dew formation or fog.

Road grades

Road grades can impact how slippery the road becomes. This is true whether you are going up or down a hill.

- When going up a steep grade in slippery weather, you should try and climb the entire grade in the same gear. If you have to downshift, you can lose traction. Maintain a slow and steady momentum and downshift before you reach the grade.
- When going down a steep grade in slippery weather, slow down as you approach the grade, gear down, and brake carefully.

Road surfaces

The type of road surface affects how weather will impact driving conditions:

- Asphalt contains petroleum so when oil mixes with water during rain or frost, it is more slippery than concrete surfaces.
- Ice forms more slowly on a gravel road than on asphalt or concrete.
- Gravel and dirt roads can change to mud after rain or snow melt.
- Sandy roads can retain and freeze water. When it thaws, the wet sand can grab tires and be soft to drive on.
- Mud can be tracked onto paved roads from adjacent construction sites, changing the traction in those areas.



- Pavements will expand as the temperature rises and contract as the temperature falls. Be aware of changes in pavement conditions when frost settles into the ground. Cracks and deterioration of road surfaces can occur.

Along with the road surface, you need to watch the road contours while driving in slippery conditions. Pay special attention to:

- A high crown
- Banking of the road
- Curves in the road
- Soft shoulders or road edges
- Potholes or frost heaves

Slow down and allow for more following distance in conditions where frost could occur.

Maintaining your vehicle during the winter

During these wintry months, OSHA is concerned about those that spend the most time on the nation's roadways — professional drivers. Drivers should always follow their vehicle's maintenance schedule. OSHA emphasizes that it is especially important during the winter months.

The agency recommends that properly trained workers inspect the following vehicle systems to determine if they are working correctly:

- **Brakes:** Brakes should provide even and balanced braking. Also check that brake fluid is at the proper level.
- **Cooling System:** Ensure a proper mixture of 50/50 antifreeze and water in the cooling system at the proper level.
- **Electrical System:** Check the ignition system and make sure that the battery is fully charged and that the connections are clean. Check that the alternator belt is in good condition with proper tension.
- **Engine:** Inspect all engine systems.
- **Exhaust System:** Check exhaust for leaks and that all clamps and hangers are snug.
- **Tires:** Check for proper tread depth and no signs of damage or uneven wear. Check for proper tire inflation.
- **Oil:** Check that oil is at proper level.
- **Visibility Systems:** Inspect all exterior lights, defrosters (windshield and rear window), and wipers. Install winter windshield wipers.



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Keep cholesterol levels in line to protect against heart disease

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

Mark Twain

A person's cholesterol can be high, low, good, bad, helpful, and harmful — all at the same time. While cholesterol may seem like a conundrum, understanding how it impacts your body can help you make heart-healthy choices.

First, the bad. Having too much cholesterol in the blood increases risk for coronary heart disease.

Plaque (a mixture of cholesterol, fat, calcium, and other substances) can build up inside coronary arteries. Over time, this can lead to a narrowing of the artery and abnormal blood flow. If plaque ruptures, a blood clot can block blood flow, leading to a heart attack.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), often called "bad" cholesterol, is the primary source of cholesterol buildup and artery blockage. A family history of high LDL cholesterol and eating too much saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol can cause an unhealthy LDL level.

There is a good side to cholesterol, however. The body needs it to help with digestion, the formation of vitamin D, and hormone creation.

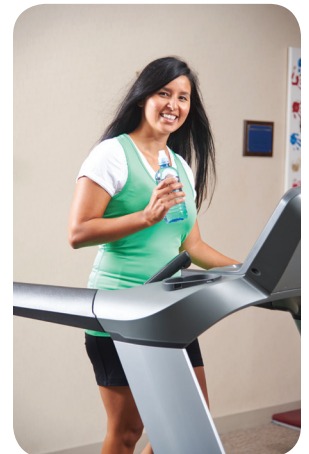
All the cholesterol a body needs is created by the liver. High-density lipoprotein (HDL), known as "good" cholesterol, keeps too much cholesterol

from building up in your arteries.

Having low HDL could be due to genetic factors, type 2 diabetes, smoking, being overweight, lack of exercise, and certain medications.

A heart-healthy diet, physical activity, and not smoking can lower your risk of having unhealthy cholesterol levels. A doctor may also prescribe medication to keep your cholesterol levels in line.

Unhealthy cholesterol levels don't usually create noticeable symptoms, but a cholesterol test, also called a lipid profile, can reveal your numbers. Results of the test should be discussed with a doctor, so you know what the numbers mean and what you should do about them.



Be sure to have your cholesterol tested; unhealthy levels usually don't show symptoms.

Aim for these optimal cholesterol levels

Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL (bad) cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dL
HDL (good) cholesterol	60 mg/dL or higher