

# Safetyline

Apartment Association of Michigan

## Benefits

Member

Membership in the Apartment Association carries benefits beyond savings on Work Comp insurance. Members join a network of their peers; thus gaining access to information sharing and the tools needed for effective loss control.

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## Apartment Association of Michigan

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## Snow's Coming; Follow These Tips To Make Sure You Are Ready

*Editor's Note: We encourage all of our members to use this information as a starting point for effective safety communication. Members should add to it based on their safety needs and work environments.*

- Outline the best place to pile plowed snow, taking into consideration vehicle and pedestrian traffic patterns and access to storage and parking areas.
- Shop around for a supplier that uses a mechanical aid such as a fork-lift truck or pallet jack to assist with the unloading of pallet size loads. Decide when and where you want salt to be used or how it is to be delivered. The use of 40-50 lb bags is recommended instead of 80-100 lb bags.
- Don't stack them too high, not above the shoulder of the shortest person who will be handling the bags.
- Establish an area for storage of salt that limits

the lifting of product. Stacking salt on a sturdy storage platform at or slightly above knee height significantly reduces the risks of back injury from lifting heavy items. Even several empty pallets stacked on top of each other can provide relief from lifting exposures.

- Check out snow throwers, salt spreaders, shovels and other snow/ice removal equipment to ensure their proper operation.
- Check down spouts and drains for rainwater. Be sure they are intact, operational and divert water from walkways and traffic areas.
- Proper lifting education, adequate clothing, knowledge of cold weather hazards, such as frostbite and over exposure, are essential. Additionally, training and supervision for employees operating power equipment is recommended.

## Tread Carefully Around Dumpsters During Winter Months

### Safety Tune Up; Checking Dumpsters Only Takes A Minute

During the winter months snow and ice can build up around dumpsters. Salting and shoveling once just isn't enough. With all the foot traffic around dumpsters, snow can be compacted and the surface can turn to an icy glaze.

"Better safe than sorry" are certainly words to live by when it comes to protecting your employees and residents during inclement weather.

Daily weather patterns should also be considered.

The concrete pads under dumpsters in sunny areas are subject to thaw-freeze cycles that can make for treacherous conditions. It is not unreasonable to have maintenance techs and grounds crews check dumpster pads at least four times a day during snowy and icy conditions.

Other tips to avoiding winter hazards around your dumpsters include:

- Dumpsters should be strategically located to minimize the travel distance the employee has to push

the transfer container.

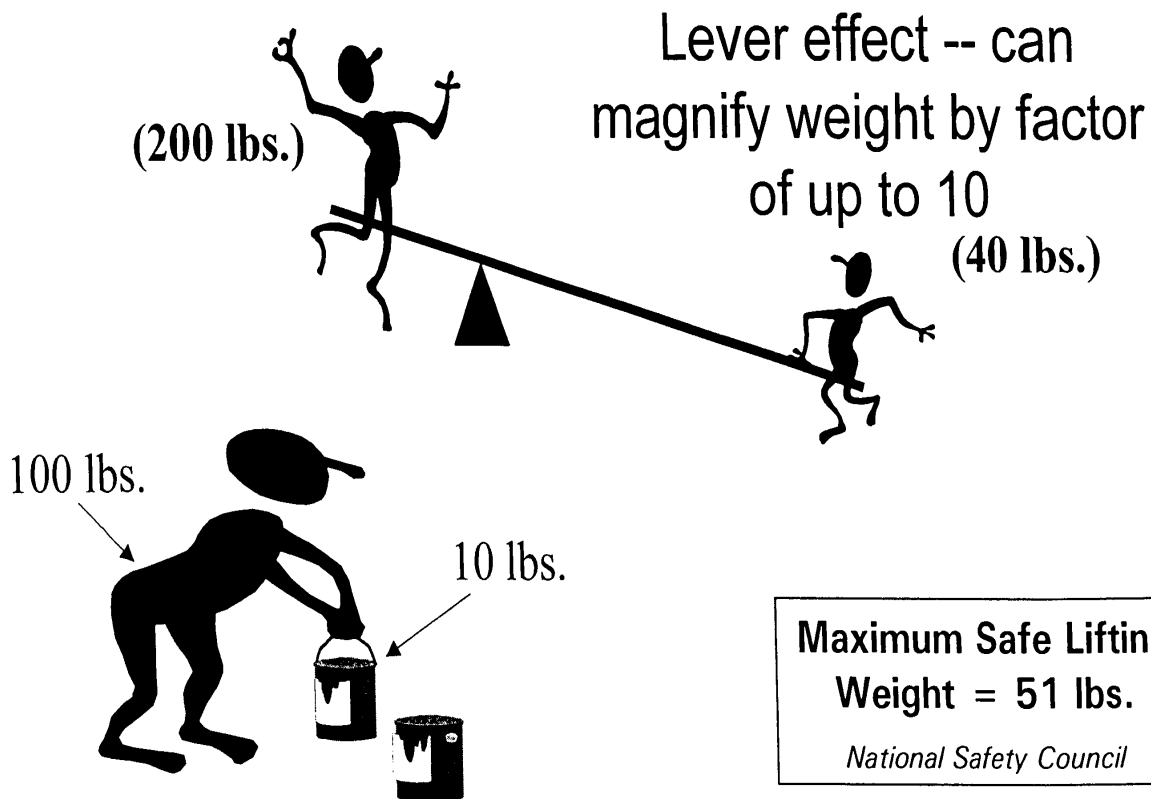
- Good housekeeping should be observed around the dumpster, with caution taken around broken glass and other protruding objects.
- Ensure that all of your dumpsters are in good condition. Check to make sure tops swing back properly and that side doors slide easily. Doors that are hard to slide could lead to a slip and fall or even cause a shoulder injury. Contact your waste hauler for repair or replacement.



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To receive a copy of Safetyline, contact Brenda Boomer at [bboomer@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bboomer@spsinsurance.com), or access it online at: [www.apartments.org](http://www.apartments.org)

# Safe Lifting



The No. 1 cause of back injuries is improper lifting. Second to this is improper carrying and twisting of the torso. In the parlance of the industry these are called "manual material handling issues."

- Don't look to lifting belts to take the place of good lifting and handling techniques. While useful, these belts are at best "band-aids." (Incidentally, these belts are to be worn only while lifting and handling materials. They are not meant to be worn throughout the workday.)
- Reduce the weight of the object. Use 40 or

50 pound bags of salt instead of 80-pound bags. Even though they are cheaper, 80-pound bags are just too heavy and unwieldy for the average maintenance worker to manage.

- Eliminate unnecessary lifting or carrying. Talk to your supplier and see if, at the point of delivery, the salt can be stored by them on skids and pallets. Ideally, the salt should be stored so that it is almost waist level. (The Fourmidable Group has constructed a bench just for the storage of salt. This allows employees to stand upright and

simply pull the salt from the shelf.)

- Make sure there is ample storage space for your salt. Granted, maintenance staffers at some properties work in close quarters and with tight budgets. Nevertheless, prevention pays off. Free pallets can often be found at construction sites. Gather these up and store your salt so that it is easily accessible to both pick-up trucks and workers using push-type hoppers for sidewalks and other small areas.
- If possible, use mechanical devices for lifting.

# SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ JOB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT IS YOUR BACK IQ?

Back injuries are a painful, sometimes debilitating, problem in many industries. Back strains can often be avoided by reducing the size or weight of materials handled by employees, by using mechanical aids such as hoists, conveyers or hydraulic lifts, and by making certain that employees are well trained in lifting techniques. But the key to back care lies with the individual worker. Everyone should be a back care "expert" and be able to answer the following questions:

**Q:** What's the most important lifting rule to remember?

**A:** Keep The Load Close! There are many other lifting rules, like "bend your knees and lift with your legs," but you can't do this in every situation. Research has also shown that leg muscles become fatigued when frequent lifts are required, so other techniques must be used as well.

**Q:** If you don't hold a load close to your body, how much heavier is the "experienced" weight than the actual weight?

**A:** Ten times as heavy! The back operates as a simple lever, with the fulcrum in the lower back. Back muscles serve as the power arm; the load being lifted is the weight arm, and a 10-1 lever ratio exists in the lower back. The further away you hold the load, the "heavier" it is.

**Q:** Why never twist with a load?

**A:** Lumbar (lower back) vertebrae, disks and joints are under the most vertical pressure when lifting a load. Twisting with a load creates a "shearing" effect on these tissues. The more "mileage" you have on your back, the less forgiving it will be under this pressure.

**Q:** Which muscles are most important for keeping the spine in its strong S-shaped curve?

**A:** Abdominal muscles, which work in cooperation with back muscles to support your spine. The trouble is, abdominals tend to weaken over time. It helps to tighten them during a heavy lift, but more importantly, keep them in good shape.

**Q:** How can stress in your life effect back pain?

**A:** Whether you're aware of it or not, emotional stress can tighten muscles. Often, fatigued back muscles are the most effected and the first to feel it. It's been said that back ache is just a tension headache that "slipped."

**Q:** What time of the day are back strains most likely to happen?

**A:** In the morning, or at the beginning of a work shift, when muscles aren't "warmed up." Trends also show an increase following the lunch hour, perhaps because blood circulation is in the stomach, instead of the large muscles, and because people may be sleepy and inattentive then.

**Q:** How does keeping flexible help prevent back and muscle strains?

**A:** Muscles tend to shorten when not used to their full capacity. Flexible muscles are less likely to be strained and injured than "tight" muscles, when sudden or heavy power is required. Pre-work stretching programs have been very successful in preventing back and muscle strains.

Take a tip from professional athletes--they warm up before a game! Even five minutes helps!

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR YOUR PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting attended by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this page to the head of your safety team

# Loss Control Management

## THE AGENDA:

- Salting and Shoveling
- Slips and Falls
- Lifting Techniques

## TO DATE WE HAVE PROVIDED OUR MEMBERS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT:

- Return To Work Programs
- Proper Claims Reporting
- Swimming Pool Chemical Safety
- Violence In The Workplace
- Mold And Mildew Handling

You're Invited to A  
Safety Seminar  
Friday January 30, 2009

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Association Offices

30375 Northwestern Hwy

Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334

Contact Brenda Boomer

at [bab@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bab@spsinsurance.com) for details



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