



In California, back injuries account for the largest proportion of incurred losses in the workers' compensation system. Claims involving back strain can cost about \$4,000. The average back injury case costs \$25,000. More serious cases requiring surgery can cost \$85,000 (*State Compensation Insurance Fund*).

The Centers for Disease Control reported that back injuries account for almost 20% of all workplace injuries and illnesses. According to the CDC, back injuries are costing the nation approximately \$20 to \$50 billion dollars per year.

Falls and backstrains are the most common causes of injuries in the painting industry.

The information provided in this brochure is for general guideline. It is not intended as a substitute for professional health care. The brochure is not designed to offer medical or legal advice. Please consult a doctor for medical advice and an attorney for legal advice.

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PDCC



**Proper Lifting Techniques
for the
Prevention
of
Back Injuries**



Proper Lifting ●

Causes

Thousands of painters injure their backs annually due to improper lifting, slips and falls and repetitive motion. Painting is a physical job and involves many repetitive motions, over-reaching, climbing, and awkward positions throughout the day.

Common Causes of Back injuries

- Improper lifting techniques
- Slips on wet greasy or oily surfaces
- Walkways with obstacles or clutter
- Weight of object lifted is too heavy
- Not wearing back supports when needed
- Stairs that are uneven or missing handrails
- Using arms only to lift
- Bending over to lift
- Loss of balance
- Improper fitting or slippery soled shoes

Repetitive Movement and Awkward Positions

- Standing for long periods
- Over-reaching while on a ladder or stool
- Pulling an object improperly
- Reaching over head for long periods
- Twisting body for leverage
- Lifting large odd shaped objects

Proper Lifting

Painting involves awkward positions and repetitive motion. Use proper lifting techniques, take breaks and rotate job duties, to protect the back and prevent fatigue:

- Test the load first
- Do not twist as you lift
- Check for proper foot position on a dry even surface
- Check for objects in the path where you are carrying an object
- Make sure you have a location to put the object down before you lift the object from the floor
- Stand close to your object
- Place feet in comfortable position on both sides of object
- Squat down bending knees grabbing object with hands not just fingers
- Bring object close to your body with elbows tight to your body
- First raise your head pushing up with your legs not your back
- Know your physical limitations
- Don't pick up something that is too heavy or can be moved using a hand truck

- When placing an object on a counter or when climbing on a ladder use the momentum of your body and legs to raise the load
- When placing on a lower shelf use legs to squat and place object on shelf.
- Wear proper fitting footwear with slip resistant soles

Exercise

- Begin a regular exercise program for strength and stability
- Tightening your abdominal muscles (core) will hold you back in good lifting position and will help prevent excessive force on the spine
- Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program