

# *In the Safety Zone*™

*A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness*

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## The Basics of Safe Lifting

Failure to practice safe lifting usually results in strain and sprain injuries. As lifting is a daily routine for most truck drivers, you can always reduce your risk of injury by applying these basic techniques:

1. **Assume the safe lifting position.** Stand close to the object and keep a wide stance. Keep feet turned out and heels down. Then squat by bending at the hips and knees. Ears, shoulders, and hips should form a nearly straight, vertical line.
2. **Prepare to lift.** Pull the load close to the body (this reduces pressure on the back) and grasp the object firmly. Tighten your stomach muscles.
3. **Let your legs do the lifting.** Maintain the natural curves of the spine and rise up from the squatting position using the legs to power the lift. Don't bend over at the neck, shoulders, or waist while lifting.



When unloading your truck, face the chosen spot and lower the load slowly—again by using the legs, not the back. Simply bend the knees and lower the body with the load, keeping the back comfortably straight.

It's also important to keep in my mind that certain situations require different techniques to reduce the risk of injury. Use these techniques for special lifting situations:

1. **Reaching overhead**—Use a step stool or ladder. Slide the load close to the body. Then let the legs and arms do all the work.
2. **Oversized or heavy loads**—Use a two-person lift. Work as a team. Designate one person to direct the team lift. Lift at the same time. Keep the load level when carrying and move smoothly together. Unload at the same time.
3. **Long objects**—Carry lumber, pipe, and other long objects over the shoulder, being careful the ends don't hit anyone or anything.
4. **Bags and sacks**—Assume the safe lifting position. Grasp the load at opposite top and bottom corners. Power the body up with the legs and use the arms to raise the load to rest on the hip. Fully stand, and move the load to rest on the shoulder.

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## Safety Considerations for Loading and Unloading

For most truck drivers, loading and unloading a truck is like second nature. This task can be performed several times a day. Your focus is only on getting the task done and moving on to the next destination. It's easy to forget that loading and unloading can be hazardous. Handling cargo involves both manual labor and equipment to make the process easier. To be safe, one must always keep certain procedures in mind.

### **Considerations:**

- The vehicle must never be overloaded and loads should be secure and evenly distributed.
- Use all available safety equipment to load and unload the vehicle.
- Be sure that you are fully trained on any safety equipment to be used.
- Before unloading, check to make sure that loads have not shifted during transit and will not fall when restraints are removed.
- Always ensure that the vehicle or trailer has its brakes applied and its wheels chocked.
- The vehicle should be as stable as possible. Tail lifts should be used properly.
- If a load is too heavy, break it down to a manageable size - it's better to make two trips back to the vehicle than to risk injury to yourself or damage to the goods being delivered.
- Use proper lifting and bending techniques to minimize the risk of injury.
- Take your time; work efficiently.



### **Loading and unloading areas should be:**

- Clear of other traffic and obstacles;
- Level. To maintain stability, trailers should be parked on firm level ground.

Drivers are at the greatest risk for injury when a load is not secure or is too heavy, or a post-trip inspection of the immediate surrounding has not been done to look for obstructions.



***Spring is a great time to.....***

***Schedule an annual check-up.*** As a driver, maintaining your health is crucial. A lot can change within two years when DOT physicals are required. Get in the habit of scheduling a check-up at least once a year.

## Avoid Shoulder Injuries

Sprains, strains and injuries to the upper extremities account for 40% of all TransForce driver injuries. The use of proper body mechanics is the key to avoiding injury to the upper body, primarily the shoulders.

A good indicator as to whether or not you are performing an overhead lift properly is to observe the shoulder movement. If the shoulders are constantly moving closer to the ears rather than staying level with the collar bone, you are increasing the risk of shoulder injury. You can usually feel the strain in this area with repetitive motion over time. When lifting overhead, the shoulders must stay down and when pushing loads, keep the shoulders level and push forward with legs bent to help distribute the force to complete the move. Consider the size and weight of the object or load you are handling. Break down a load if necessary to reduce the strain on the shoulders and back. Ask for assistance if necessary.



Be aware that good posture and warming up the shoulder muscles by performing stretches and rowing-type exercises will reduce the risk of injury. The shoulder is one of the most flexible muscles in our body. A well balanced exercise program that promotes flexibility, upper back strengthening and proper body mechanics is the key to shoulder injury prevention.

## Congratulations to the Vol. 4 Issue 6 Safety Quiz Winners!

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Driver Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Driver Name</u>
DET	Gage, Jeff	HAR	Miller, Steve
HOU	Schexnayder, Lynell	CHI	Ward, Jr., William
KAN	Shoemaker, Thomas	BIR	Hamilton, Ron
GRP	Stratton, Terry	ALB	Steven, James
KAN	Cox, Curtis	HAR	Alexander, Jim
CIN	Weeks, Marvin	CHI	Fox, Dwight
HOU	Esparza, Jr., Humberto	DET	Nastevski, Donald
HAR	Gingrich, Glenn	ATL	Murry, Vera
IND	Deter, John W	COL	Bidwell, Robert
MEM	Gray, Alexander	DET	Valenti, Jerry

Gift cards will be mailed out to all of our winners the week of April 9, 2012. TransForce assumes no responsibility for gift cards after they are mailed. Drivers should contact their branch if there has been an address change since taking the quiz.