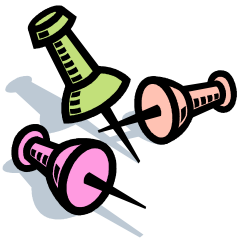
# Safety Note

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Safety Note # 10

## SAFE LIFTING PRACTICES

More than 1,000,000 back injuries occur in the workplace each year. Approximately 800,000 of these injuries are to the lower back and 750,000 happen while lifting objects. ***English and Spanish language safety videos on preventing back injuries are also available for loan from the ANR Environmental Health & Safety Library at (530) 752-3933.***

**Recommended Safe Lifting Practices**

- Prior to lifting, determine the weight of the load by pushing on the object.
- If you determine the weight to be large, reduce the load by splitting it in half or more.
- Do not try to lift objects beyond your capability. If you have to strain to lift or carry a load, then it is too heavy for you.
- If the weight of a load is beyond your capability, find someone to assist you with lifting the load or use a forklift, dolly, or hand truck to move the load.
- Before lifting a package, make sure the contents are secure and the weight is balanced so that the contents will not shift when moved.
- Stand close to the load with your feet slightly staggered and spread apart to about shoulder width.
- While maintaining a straight back, squat by bending your knees.
- Firmly grasp the object and begin slowly lifting with your legs.
- Do not twist your body while lifting at a controlled speed. Keep the object's center of gravity as close to your body as possible.
- Carry the load between the shoulder and waist.
- If required to turn while carrying the load, turn with the feet and not with the trunk of the body.
- Do not walk on slippery or uneven surfaces while carrying a load.
- To set a load down, lower yourself at a controlled speed by bending your knees while maintaining a straight back.
- Take frequent breaks when you are lifting and carrying many loads. Do not overtire yourself.
- Studies conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) concluded there was insufficient evidence to recommend the use of back belts to prevent back injuries.