



BACK BELTS

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Branch Loss Control and Prevention Section*

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Back belts are widely used in many environments. There are differences of opinions regarding the benefits of using such belts in the workplace. Currently, the research data is limited and inconclusive about the effectiveness of the back belts in reducing back injuries. Therefore, until such time that conclusive evidence is available, back belts are not considered personal protective equipment.

The use of back belts is at the discretion of the departments. If employees are allowed to use back belts during work, then an appropriate program should be set up to ensure proper use. The program should incorporate the following elements:

1. Proper fitting of back belts (type and size)
2. Training
 - a. Proper lifting techniques
 - b. Proper use of the back belts
 - c. Limitation of back belts
3. Periodic monitoring

The use of back belts is not a substitute for proper lifting techniques and injuries can still occur with the use of back belts. Additionally, with a false sense of protection, employees may subject themselves to greater injury risk by lifting more weight than they would without a belt. Training and periodic monitoring of employees are essential to ensure proper use of the back belts.

If there are any questions, please contact the Loss Control and Prevention Section.

Note: This bulletin does not address the use of back belts prescribed by a doctor to treat a medical condition.