



For immediate release  
February 24, 2011

## **Important Reminders for Volunteers Battling the Floods**

In this crucial hour of need, many volunteers are stepping up across North Dakota to provide help against the rising floodwaters. Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI) wants to remind employers and volunteers to ensure that proper steps are being taken to make sure that all volunteers are properly covered in the event of an injury.

Volunteer Coverage for flood and disaster relief volunteers may be available by registering with the appropriate emergency response organization. Most of these organizations can secure coverage for volunteers in the event of an emergency and many have already. It is essential that volunteers register with the appropriate organization prior to engaging in disaster relief activities.

In addition, volunteers should, "Put Safety to Work" when moving sand bags. Attached to this news release is a list of proper lifting techniques that can be copied and distributed to volunteers. It is also available on the WSI website at:

<http://www.workforcesafety.com/safety/sops/MaterialHandlingLifting.pdf>

If employers or volunteers have any questions about coverage, please contact WSI at 1-800-777-5033.

## **PLEASE USE SAFE LIFTING TECHNIQUES**

Due to the repetitive nature of lifting and the cumulative nature of minor injuries, especially to the back, it is imperative that proper lifting techniques be used on every lift, regardless of weight or bulk.

### **Set up the lift:**

1. Check the surface for hazards that might cause trips or slips.
2. Push or drag the load to a level area.
3. Face the direction you will carry the load.

### **Lift using a good technique:**

1. Place feet about shoulder width apart, with one slightly ahead of the other for balance.
2. Bend at the knees, keeping the back straight.
3. Tuck in chin to keep upper spine in line.
4. Grip the load firmly with both hands.
5. Lift, using the legs, in one continuous move.
6. Keep load close to the body, with arms extended downward.
7. Turn using your feet.
8. Keep your back straight and do not twist.

**Move heavy or bulky loads in stages with rest in between. When lifting objects of 50 lbs. or more, use mechanical lifting equipment or get someone to help.**

**If you lose your balance or cannot maintain the load, drop it, pushing load away from you.**

### **Set the load down using good technique.**

1. Stop and place feet apart.
2. Lower in one motion, bending at the knees.
3. Keep back straight throughout.
4. When items in contact with surface (farthest edge first), release lower hand then, when hands and feet are clear, release the item.
5. Stand slowly, using your legs.

### **When using several people to lift:**

1. Choose a leader who will give verbal signals.
2. Be sure everyone understands the lift, movements, and meaning of orders.
3. Confirm that everyone has a firm grip and is ready to lift.
4. Lift together and check that everyone is OK.
5. The leader shall direct movement.
6. Lower or empty together, being careful not to over load any one person.

**This information available at the Workforce Safety & Insurance website:**

<http://www.workforcesafety.com/safety/sops/MaterialHandlingLifting.pdf>