



## KEEP SAFE

A Monthly Publication for Texas Electric Cooperatives

*April 2010*

### Follow these tips to prevent sprains and strains

**A**nyone can get an injury that results in a sprain or strain. These injuries are so common that they result in more absences from work than any other type, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In fact, they account for one-third to one-half of the total injuries and illnesses reported.

Workers who move or lift people or objects, such as healthcare workers and airline employees, are at the highest risk. Lifting, stretching and pushing are common causes of sprains and strains.

#### Know the risks

If you have ever damaged a ligament, the tissue that connects bone to bone, you have had a sprain. You have had a strain if you injured a muscle or muscle tendon, the tissue that connects muscle to bone.

Most workplace sprains and strains affect the back, arms and shoulders; they occur because of poor material-handling techniques. A worker may try to pull or lift a heavy or awkward object without help, for example, or may lift an object while twisting from the waist. If your muscles or ligaments have weakened over time from aging and lack of exercise, you are more apt to get a sprain or strain than if you are physically fit.

#### Avoid the risks

Sprains and strains are easy to prevent. By following some simple tips, you can reduce your risk of getting these injuries.

◆ Handle with care. Many sprains and strains occur because workers lift things that weigh too much or because

they lift incorrectly. Be sure you know the proper way to lift:

- ✓ Bend the knees, not the back
- ✓ Carry loads close to your body
- ✓ Don't twist

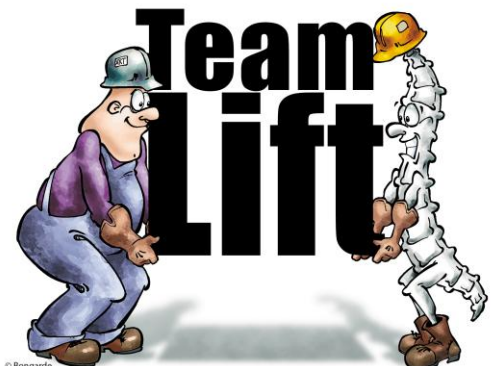
◆ Say "I can't." Don't try to move or lift an object that you can't handle. Instead of lifting a 75-pound box, break it down into smaller parts. If something isn't divisible, use a mechanical device, like a wheelbarrow or hoist, or lift it with a co-worker.

◆ Be sure equipment works. Devices may put more strain on your body if they don't work properly. If the wheels on carts are not aligned, for example, you could strain your arms, shoulders and back.

◆ Don't bend or reach upward unnecessarily. Put as much work as you can at waist level. In an office, for example, put the files you use most often in the midrange so you won't have to reach up or bend down for them.

◆ Use back belts as instructed. Be sure to lift correctly when you wear the belt because it cannot prevent injury by itself.

◆ Use good posture. If you strain forward, you can put a strain on your neck.



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(Sprains and strains continued from page 1)

◆ Watch where you walk. If you slip or fall, you may sprain your wrist or ankle. Be on the lookout for objects that clutter walkways, such as boxes or extension cords. Check for rugs with curled edges, wet or icy areas that can cause slips and uneven terrain.

◆ Move around. If you sit in one position too long, you can put tension on your ligaments and weaken your muscles.

◆ Exercise. Stretch during the day to warm your muscles and increase your flexibility.

◆ Don't smoke. Smoking reduces nutrient flow to the spine and increases the risk of injury.

◆ Eat well. A nutritious diet gives you energy to function better and helps with recovery, too.

◆ Relax. Stress can cause muscles to tense and can cause distraction, which increases the risk of injury. Some techniques to reduce stress include exercising, deep breathing, listening to music and reading.

If you do get an injury that results in a sprain or strain, do the following:

◆ Rest the injured part of your body for a few days.

◆ Apply ice or cold packs periodically during the first three days to reduce swelling and pain. Keep the area elevated and wrap it if possible. If the area remains swollen, see a doctor.

— *Safety+Health*

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## 67 Seniors to receive Scholarships

TEC Loss Control is proud to award sixty seven Loss Control Scholarships to qualifying seniors in 2010. Congratulations to all winners!

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## Scholarship Auction a Success

Thank You to everyone who contributed and purchased items at the Scholarship Auction held during the Loss Control Conference in March. Your generosity will help assist in providing the Loss Control Scholarships to the sixty seven 2010 recipients.

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# Tornado tips

Tornado time starts about this time of year in some parts of the country. Months of peak storm activity are April, May and June. Tornadoes are most likely to form from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Be sure you know what to do if you are caught in one.

**Go to the right corner** — For many years, it was believed that the southwest corner of the basement was the place to be. NOT SO!! In fact, experts say it can be the worst place to be. The most recent damage patterns indicate that the safest corner is the side farthest from the oncoming tornado.

**Take cover** — If your house has no basement, go to the far corner on the ground floor. Hide under a heavy piece of furniture, like a bed or a desk, or in a closet or other room without windows.

**Don't drive** — You can hide, but you can't run. Tornadoes don't travel much faster than 60mph, but the roads will likely be clogged with vehicles trying to escape. In a 1979 Texas tornado, half of the deaths happened to people trying to escape in cars.

Anyone already on the road should remember that although it is best to flee at right angles to the twister, it can change directions quickly and unpredictably. So seek protection in a ditch, ravine, or any sturdy shelter you may find.

**In a mobile home? Get mobile!** — You are usually better off in a structure, but if you're in a mobile home, get out — quickly. When last counted, 45% of all tornado fatalities occurred in mobile homes.

**Close the windows** — We were once told to open the house windows. Don't do it. It could make it easier for the winds to lift the roof or the whole building

**Tornado facts** — With winds up to 300 mph, the tornado is one of the most savage storms on earth. It is a narrow, violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm and touching the ground. All thunderstorms are capable of producing tornadoes.

The funnel clouds are most likely to appear when the following conditions are present: unseasonably warm and humid air near the ground, cold air above it, and strong winds above the cold layer. The warm air ascends, mixing with the cold and a spinning action results.





## 2010 TEC LOSS CONTROL SCHOOLS (33 Schools)

Metering School (Merkel)	January 5 – 8
Transformer School (Gilmer)	January 12 - 15
Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School (Gonzales)	January 26 – 29
Transformer School (Livingston)	February 2 - 5
Transformer School (Merkel)	February 23 – 26
Advanced Pole Climbing School (Gonzales)	February 23 - 26
Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School (Tahoka)	March 9 – 12
Underground School (Quitman)	March 22 – 26
Metering School (Sulphur Springs)	April 6 – 9
Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School (Livingston)	April 13 – 16
Basic Pole Climbing School (Gonzales)	April 20 – 23
Hotline 1 – 4 School (Henderson)	April 26 – 30
Two Day Transformer School (San Augustine)	April 28 - 29
Basic Pole Climbing School (Gilmer)	May 4 - 7
Hotline 1 – 4 School (Merkel)	May 10 - 14
Transformer School (Gonzales)	May 18 – 21
Transformer School (Tahoka)	May 25 – 28
Basic Pole Climbing School (Muenster)	June 8 – 11
Metering School (Livingston)	June 8 – 11
Underground School (Gonzales)	June 14 - 18
Basic Pole Climbing School (Tahoka)	June 22 – 25
Regulator, Recloser, Capacitor School (Merkel)	June 29 – July 2
Troubleshooting School (Gonzales)	July 20 – 23
Metering School (Fredericksburg)	August 10 – 13
Troubleshooting School (Sulphur Springs)	August 17 - 20
Troubleshooting School (Livingston)	August 24 - 27
Hotline 1 – 4 School (Gonzales)	August 30 – Sept 3
Underground School (McGregor)	September 13 - 17
Hotline 1 – 4 School (Levelland)	September 20 – 24
Underground School (Levelland)	October 4 – 8
Transformer School (McGregor)	October 12 - 15
Underground School (Merkel)	October 18 - 22
Hotline 1 – 4 School (Livingston)	October 25 – 29