



Office of Safety & Risk Management
California State University, Bakersfield
9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, California 93311-1099



661-664-2066
FAX 661-664-3194

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 25, 2001
To: CSUB Staff
From: Barbara Brenner
Safety and Risk Manager
Subject: Use of Back Belts

Back support belts have been widely marketed as personal protective devices for the prevention of back injuries. However, there is not sufficient evidence to support claims that back belts reduce injury rates. Research has shown that the elastic belts neither reduce muscle activity nor increase lifting capacity. Flexible belts are not rigid enough to restrict unhealthy bending of the back during lifting. For these reasons, back belts will not be provided to CSUB employees as safety equipment.

If you have a back support belt and choose to keep wearing it, be aware that these devices provide NO protection against muscle strain or disc compression. Safe lifting practices and proper work design are the only proven methods for maintaining a healthy back.

FOR SAFE LIFTING:

- ◆ **Do not store heavy items on the floor or bottom shelf. Waist height is the best zone for commonly moved materials.**
- ◆ **Use mechanical lifting aids whenever possible.**
- ◆ **When lifting is required, position the item directly in front of yourself. Hold the load as close to your body as possible.**
- ◆ **Bend your knees and maintain the inward curve of your low back while lifting. Use the Save A Back posture!**
- ◆ **Do not twist or bend while carrying a load.**
- ◆ **Get help to handle heavy or bulky loads. Plan the work with your partner. Do not start moving until you are certain the other person is ready.**

If you have any questions or concerns about back safety, please call me at ext. 2066.