

SECTION K

USE OF A SAFETY SUPPORT BELT

Studies have shown that wearing a back belt in combination with the consistent practice of good body mechanics, accepted lifting techniques, and sound physical conditioning are the most effective methods of reducing the risk of back injury. Back belts are meant to be a reminder of good body mechanics.

- 1.0 Back belts provided by the SIPE Safety Officer are issued as safety items. Back belts must be worn whenever there is a requirement to push, pull, lift or carry while working as a district employee. Failure to wear appropriate back belts can result in disciplinary action as defined in Section A, paragraph 4.0 of the district's Injury and Illness Prevention Program.
- 2.0 The following job classifications have been identified as recipients of back belts:
 - Maintenance
 - Custodial
 - Warehouse
 - Food Service
 - Special Education - for disabled students
 - Bus Drivers - for disabled students
 - Mechanics
 - Groundkeepers
- 3.0 Supervisors requesting back belts must contact the SIPE Safety Officer. Upon approval of the request, employees will be directed to contact the vendor for sizing and training on the proper use of the belts.
- 4.0 Back belts are issued on a one-time basis only. Any replacements needed, i.e., worn out belts, stolen belts, etc. will be the responsibility of the district or employee.
- 5.0 How to wear back belts:
 1. Back belts should be worn low across the back to support the L3 and L5 vertebrae of the back (see figure 1).
 2. A corset-style back belt consists of two elastic sub-assemblies joined as one unit.

The first assembly, often referred to as the primary “belt”, has the purpose of positioning the boning stays properly on the body. The second assembly, often referred to as the cinch “strap”, is joined at the center back of the primary belt and closes over the boning stays sewn into the primary belt, exerting pressure which forms the stays to the shape of the lower back.

Shoulder straps are not suspenders. Just the opposite, a tight shoulder strap adjustment works against the principle of lumbar locking by potentially pulling the back support up the body and out of the desired low-on-the hips position.

The purpose of the shoulder straps is two fold: (1) Compliance - a supervisor looking over a group of employees can readily confirm (by looking for shoulder straps over clothing) that workers have their assigned belt with them, and (2) convenience - when not engaged, the back supports will hang loosely (like a vest) from the shoulders and remain available when work resumes.