Overexertion and Overextension

Overexertion is an overextension of our physical capabilities – going a little beyond what our bodies are able to accomplish without dangerous results.

Let’s first talk about overexertion, which covers many things. Perhaps the prime offender is working at a physically exhausting job for too long, in which case severe fatigue sets in. Not only can this be harmful, but the reduced awareness under such a condition can cause us to have accidents more readily. Also working too long in temperature extremes can, of course, lead to colds, frostbite, heat exhaustion or heat stroke, depending upon whether the temperature is too hot or too cold.

Another form of overexertion can occur when attempting to lift or move heavy or awkward loads. Back injuries, hernias, sprains, and strains can cause serious trouble.

We must point out very clearly that the term "overexertion" is relative. What would not be overexertion for a worker in good condition might be too much for someone who is out of condition.

Now let’s talk about overextension, which primarily deals with motion or balance. How many times have we heard of a person trying to reach far to the side while working from a ladder, which results in a serious fall?

Attempting to jump from one level to another, or across an opening or a ditch, is overextension. Running down stairs or taking two steps at a time is asking for an injury.

Reaching too far out from platforms or scaffolds or from members of a structure being erected is dangerous overextension.

Remember, overextension of what your body can safely do, from a health and well-being point of view, is overexertion.

In general, overextension involves trying to go beyond your own personal physical limits.

Be smart – don’t expose yourself to either of these injuries.