



TAILBOARD TRAINING

VFIS “**Tailboard Training**” is a bi-weekly loss prevention program for clients. The program is intended to provide information on current safety issues facing emergency responders in a format that will quickly and effectively communicate a safe practice to implement and relate directly to your organization. These are released every other Thursday by VFIS.

Firefighter injury cause: Overexertion/strain

It’s been said numerous times before, “firefighting is a dangerous occupation.” The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that approximately 80,000 injuries occur annually to firefighters. International Fire Service Training Association data suggests that as many 50 percent of all firefighter injuries may be strain and overexertion related.

To help manage this issue:

- It’s important for firefighters to learn proper lifting and movement techniques to limit strain on their body, as much as possible.
- When lifting, keep the back as straight as possible and lift with the legs, not the back.
- When needed or when possible, use a second person or mechanical lifting device to help prevent back injuries

Keep in mind, back injuries are not the only strain/sprain situation that can develop.

**How does this relate to your organization’s experience?
If you have not experienced injuries recently in your organization, discuss fire situations you have had and what you did or didn’t do, that prevented an injury.**

While our mission as fire and rescue personnel is to save lives and property, if we are not physically able to do the job, we cannot fulfill our mission. In these situations:

Recognizing how to prevent injuries and illnesses is EVERYONE’S responsibility.

The objective is to complete the training in 15 minutes or less with participants leaving the session with a better understanding of how to keep from getting hurt.

SCENARIO

1. Review any existing protocols, strategic approaches or SOGs on this topic prior to conducting the *Tailboard Training*.
2. Ask a member to review the last incident where this scenario may have existed.
3. Have the group discuss the actions that were taken.
4. Were they done in a safe manner?
5. Were there any actions taken that could have been done differently?

NOTE: Most “after action reviews” such as this develop a number of suggestions that actions should have been or should be done differently. The officers need to balance this immediate reaction to the reality of the situation. Was the outcome positive or negative? Would the outcome have changed if actions were done differently? Should any additional safety precautions have been taken? If so, how and what?

1. **Have you had any such incidents in your department or in nearby departments? If so, describe a type of injury, accident or incident that has occurred or could occur.**
2. **Commentary on how to better deal with this issue**
3. **Review of any related departmental standard operating guidelines that may apply**
4. **Have a short open dialogue on the subject with your personnel.**
5. **VFIS References:**

[Firefighter Safety Posters and Training Courses](#)

[Firefighter Safety – It’s Your Responsibility](#)

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