

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



## ***Tool Box Talk***

*Week of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (Monday)*

We may have heard physicians use the term soft tissue injury to describe an ailment but what exactly are they talking about? A soft tissue injury is an injury to muscles, ligaments, or tendons and can be caused by repetitive activities or the result of a single incident. Repetitive activities can put repeated stress on a muscle, tendon, or ligament and cause micro tears that in time may contribute to larger tears. Some of the most common soft tissue injuries you may experience include sprains, strains, contusions, bursitis, tendonitis, and stress injuries. Whether your injury is the result of overuse or from a single event, the result is still the same, pain, swelling, redness, and instability. These injuries can limit your range of motion and prevent you from doing your job safely and effectively. Depending on their severity, these injuries may require surgery to repair damage to ligaments, muscles, or tendons. For these injuries a doctor will assess and determine the correct treatment and rehabilitation protocol.

The first twenty four hours after an injury are very important and the following advice will help minimize the problems after the injury and help promote healing. During the first twenty four hours follow the acronym PRICE, which stands for protection, rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Protection means discontinuing activities which cause undue stress to the affected area and may cause further damage or delay healing. Rest means that you rest the affected area to allow healing. During the initial twenty four hour period apply ice to the injured area to decrease swelling and help reduce bruising. Ice can be applied every two hours, but it must be done carefully, because it is possible to get an ice burn. It is important to note that you never apply ice directly over an open wound or to an area with poor circulation. Compression refers to applying pressure by using a bandage to help contain swelling. It is very important not to make the bandage so tight that it restricts circulation or decreases one's ability to feel sensation. Whenever possible the affected area should be supported and

elevated and this will help to reduce fluid pressure and thereby reduce swelling in the injured area.

In many sports, injuries are commonplace and expected. No craftsman ever expects to get injured on the job, however all too frequently it occurs. When we leave safety on the sidelines, instead of incorporating it into our game plan and job execution, we set our team up for failure. Safety and performance can and must go hand in hand for success. For workers in the construction industry, a healthy body is vital in job performance and providing for our families. With proper communication, planning, and execution we can remain in the game and not be sidelined by injury. In our next installment on soft tissue injuries we will look at ways to prevent such injuries.