



Safety Matters

Talking Points for Supervisors



Lifting, Carrying and Transporting Heavy Loads

For almost every worker, ergonomic hazards are present. Injuries caused by repetitive motions, poor lifting and handling practices are some of the most common.

The following safety tips provide helpful ergonomic guidelines for the variety of different 'lifting' situations workers may encounter.

Pre-Lift

- Consider the weight of the load being lifted. Will you need help or mechanical assistance? Is the load too heavy for one person?
- Consider the size and/or shape of the load. Do they create any additional challenges?
- Determine if you will have to turn or change direction while carrying the load.
- Find out if the route you will take with the load is clear of obstructions, slip, trip or fall hazards.
- Make sure you have a back support belt and are wearing it properly.

Safe Lifting

When lifting a load from ground level:

- Get as close as possible to the load.
- Bend your knees, not your back.
- Get a good grip on the object and test its weight.
- Keep the load close to your body and lift using your legs.
- Be aware of your balance and what part of your body is doing the work - it should be your legs.

When lifting a load from overhead:

- Make certain you are standing on a stable surface before you attempt the lift.
- Test the load to be sure you can lift it safely.
- Take the object off the shelf or support carefully, maintaining your balance.
- Maintain control of the load, and bring it down to waist level.

When lifting from a shelf, desk or counter:

- Pull the load close to your body and test its weight.
- Shift the weight of the load to your legs by keeping it close.
- Avoid reaching and lifting at the same time.

Carrying

- Look ahead to make certain your path is clear.
- Avoid stairs if possible. If you take stairs, use the banister or wall to help you maintain your balance.
- Have someone else open doors, gates or other closed entries for you.
- Change direction by moving your feet, not your hips.
- Keep shoulders, hips and feet pointing the same direction.
- Never twist at the waist while carrying a load.
- Set the load down if it becomes too heavy or unstable.

Moving Carts, Hanging Loads

- Remember to push, not pull whenever possible.
- Position the load so that your legs supply the force.
- Use hands and arms for control and direction of the load.
- Keep hands and fingers inside the load whenever possible.
- Watch for pinch or shear points on carts, dollies or hoists.

Setting Loads Down

- Bend your knees, not your waist.
- Set down the corner or edge of the object closest to you first, keeping your fingers out from under the load.

Safe lifting, carrying and transporting techniques can help you avoid sprains, strains and other painful injuries at work. Whatever the task, make sure to ask for help when a load is too heavy for you to handle on your own!

Safe lifting, carrying and transporting techniques can help you avoid sprains, strains and other painful injuries when working with heavy or awkward loads.

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