

SAFETY TALK

Lifting & Handling Materials

Most workplaces that move materials use some type of mechanical device for lifting, carrying, holding pushing or pulling loads of materials. Unfortunately, much of this type of work is still done manually putting you and your coworkers at risk for injuries. Lifting and carrying materials often or for long periods of time puts stress on your back and shoulders that can lead to a serious muscle or joint injury. Although carts and dollies are used to reduce injury, their use can also lead to injury if they are very heavy or moved incorrectly. The most common injuries that occur when lifting, holding or handling materials typically involve the back, Shoulders and Neck and Arms, Hands and Wrists.



When you lift, bend forward, stretch upward or outward, the muscles of your back work harder, ligaments stretch and your discs get squeezed. These movements can cause the discs to become weak and your muscles to be strained. This can lead to permanent pain overtime.

Carrying even light loads above shoulder level can quickly lead to tired and sore shoulder and neck muscles. The heavier the load, the quicker this will happen. Continual stress on your shoulders will squeeze the bursa causing them to become stiff, swollen and inflamed. If this isn't dealt with, it may become impossible to lift the arms. When you carry a load manually, your hands and wrists can be cut or worn.

There's always going to be some manual material handling at every work site but you can do it in a way that reduces the risk of injury. Solutions can include methods to reduce how often and how long these tasks are to be performed or using smarter ways to lift and carry loads. These solutions can include changing:

- There are many types of material handling devices that can be purchased or rented. Devices include special round handles and cushioned grips for carrying heavy objects, powered and non-powered carts and dollies for indoor and outdoor use. There are also a great variety of mechanical, hydraulic and vacuum lifts that can be used to position most equipment and materials.
- Site rules can be set that require materials to be stored at a convenient height off the ground and transported using some type of mechanical device. Improved planning of storage areas can also help to minimize how often materials need to be moved at a site.
- Employers can provide ergonomics training to help you identify potential hazards and find effective solutions, as well as workplace exercise programs to help decrease muscle injuries.

Discussion Questions

What are the most common injuries associated with lifting, holding and handling materials?

How can these injuries be avoided?





MEETING / TRAINING

Attendance Roster

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/___

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

___/___/___
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

___/___/___
Date