

## Safe Work Procedure: Manual Materials Handling

Department/Area:	Approved by:	Date Created:	Review/Revision Date:
Maintenance/Custodial	Workplace Safety and Health Committee	Nov.15, 2023	Annually

Potential Hazard	Risk level
Awkward/sustained postures - lifting, reaching	High
Forceful exertions - lifting, pushing, pulling	High
Repetitive movements	Medium
Compression - edges press into body	Low
Sharp points/edges	Low
Pinch points	Low
Materials falling	Low
Surfaces causing falls - clutter	Low
Moving machinery - forklifts, pallet jacks, etc.	Low

Risk control devices, personal protective equipment, and other safety considerations	Training/Reference info
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gloves when using knife or carrying sharp/rough material</li> <li>• Cut away from your body if you're using a knife</li> <li>• Safety footwear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe lifting orientation</li> </ul>

**Note:** Common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) can include pain, burning, swelling, stiffness, numbness/tingling, and/or loss of movement or strength in a body part. Report these to your supervisor.

**The direct supervisor must ensure that employees who report to him/her are trained and follow this safe work procedure.**

### Steps to complete this task safely:

- Assess the load. Do not attempt to lift or carry heavy or awkward loads by yourself. Use a lift aid (wheeler, cart, etc.), get assistance, or, if authorized, use a lifting device.
- Use stairs or a lift if items are beyond a comfortable reach or if reaching upward is repetitive.
- Wear gloves when lifting or moving sharp-edged or rough materials; for example, steel, lumber, pipes, cables or chains. Beware of any pinch points when handling materials.
- If you must slide material closer to or away from you, try to keep your back straight and weight shift with your whole body rather than using only your arms.
- If possible, ensure there is enough room to lift properly and travel by removing any obstructions.



- **Follow proper lifting and carrying procedures:**
  - Use a wide stance either side to side or front to back (lunge position). Get close to what you have to lift.
  - Get a good grip before lifting.
  - Bend your knees and hips.
  - Try to keep your back straight, shoulders back and elbows in.
  - Lift by pushing with your legs. If you're using a lunge position, push more through your front leg.
  - Don't hold your breath.
  - Keep the load close to your body when lifting or carrying.
  - Turn by taking small steps with your feet. **Do not** twist your back when you're lifting, lowering or carrying.
- Do not swing and throw loads or try to catch a falling load.
- When two or more people are lifting or carrying a load, they should decide how to handle the load before lifting it. One person should determine the count to lift.
- To set the load down on a low surface, bend your knees and follow the same procedure as lifting, but in reverse.
- To place the load on a surface that's mid-height, keep the load close to your body, move close and square to the surface, and bend your leg(s) to lower it onto the shelf.
- When placing light loads on a high shelf within standing reach, or when pulling lights loads from a high shelf: keep your elbows in line with your body, and tighten your abdominals to help keep your back from arching backward excessively.
- When loading materials on a pallet jack or motorized lift truck, ensure that the material is balanced and secured to prevent it from falling.