



# Safety Matters

Talking Points for

Cool Insuring Agency, Inc.: Your construction workplace safety partner

## Manual Material Handling

For construction workers and contractors, repetitive motions, poor lifting and unsafe handling injuries are some of the most common. Coincidentally, they are also usually preventable by practicing safe lifting techniques. Use these helpful ergonomic guidelines to lift any size load without causing injury to yourself or others.

### Pre-Lifting Techniques

- Determine whether or not you will need assistance to do the job.
- Consider the size or shape of the load – bulky or odd-shaped building materials could create 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 and slip, trip or fall hazards.
- Make sure your route is not dangerously close to vehicular traffic, especially if it is traveling at high speeds.
- Make sure you have a back support belt and are wearing it properly.
- Determine what kind of personal protective equipment (PPE) you will need to protect your hands and prevent slippage during lifting.

### Lifting Techniques

- Get as close as possible to the load and keep it close to your body.
- Always bend from the knees and

not the back, and lift using your legs.

- Be aware of your balance.
- Stand on a stable, even surface, and wear proper foot protection to prevent slips and other injuries.
- Bring the load down to waist level if lifting from above, and wear a hard hat to prevent head injuries from dropped materials.
- No matter what you are carrying, always avoid reaching and lifting at the same time.

### Carrying Techniques

- Look ahead instead of down to make sure your path is clear.
- Watch out for terrain changes, and avoid carrying up stairs if possible.
- Have someone else open doors, gates or other closed entries for you.
- Keep shoulders, hips and feet aligned – do not twist at the waist or change direction by moving your hips.
- Set the load down on a firm surface if it becomes too heavy or unstable.
- Watch for pinch or shear points on carts, dollies and hoists.
- When you are finished transporting the load, set down the corner or edge of the object closest to you first, keeping your fingers out from underneath.

**For construction workers and contractors, repetitive motions, poor lifting and unsafe handling are the cause of some of the most common injuries.**

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