

Lifting and Moving Materials

Back injuries can result from improper lifting or lifting a load that is too heavy. Some factors that contribute to injuries from lifting are:

- **Weight**—Overestimating your physical abilities and lifting objects that are too heavy
- **Size**—Moving an object that you have the ability to move, but that is too long or high or wide to move safely
- **Shape**—Moving an object that you have the ability to move, but that has an odd shape that makes safe lifting or moving difficult
- **Obstructions**—Stacking materials so high that your vision is limited or blocked completely while moving the materials
- **Wrong position**—Twisting or turning into an awkward position while lifting
- **Wrong storage**—Storing heavy objects on the floor so that lifting results in strain
- **Unsafe reaching**—Using chairs, boxes, or other objects to reach items, instead of using a step or a ladder



Steps for Safe Lifting

To lift objects safely alone:

1. Size up the load to make sure you can handle it alone.
2. Place your feet close to the object and about 12 inches apart.
3. Bend your knees, grip the object securely, the lift the load straight up. Push with your legs while keeping your back straight and keeping the load close to your body. If needed, wear the right gloves for a secure grip and wear safety shoes with steel toes.
4. To turn your body after lifting the load, turn with your feet. Do not twist at the waist.
5. Check your path of travel to be sure it is clear of people and objects.
6. Lower the load by bending your knees.



To lift objects safely as a team:

1. Stay close to the load.
2. Distribute the load equally. For long objects, carry the object at the same level and on the same side of the body.
3. Give directions while lifting and moving. Plan the job and the path of travel before you lift.
4. Watch out for the other lifter (if one of you must walk backwards).
5. Set the load down in the reverse order of lifting it.