

Safe Lifting—Special Situations

Municipal employees must often lift materials to put them into place or move them from one location to another. Sometimes the materials are easily moved, sometimes not. The actual weight of the object is not the only consideration. Large, irregularly shaped objects, or heavy loads need special consideration and handling. Before you lift, be sure to plan how to move the load safely – and know your limits.

Guide for Discussion

Techniques for Special Lifting Situations

Two-Person Lift:

- Work with a person of about the same height.
- Decide in advance which person will direct the move.
- Keeping knees bent and back straight, lift and raise the load together.
- Move smoothly together as you carry, keeping the load at the same level.
- Unload at the same time, keeping knees bent.

Objects with Awkward Shapes:

- Long objects:
 - Squat down next to the object with your feet spread shoulder width apart.
 - Grip the object with both hands.
 - Rise to a standing position.
 - Carry lumber, pipe, and other long objects over the shoulder.
 - Be careful the ends don't hit anyone or anything.
- Bags and sacks:
 - Assume the safe lifting position.
 - Grasp the load at opposite top and bottom corners.
 - Power your body up with your legs and use your arms to raise the load to rest on your hip.
 - Fully stand and move the load to rest on your shoulder.

Hard-to-Get-at Locations:

- Stand as close as possible to the object.
- Bend forward slightly at the hips and push your buttocks out behind you.
- Bend your knees, keeping your back straight and stomach muscles tight.
- Grip the object firmly.
- Lift so that your leg, stomach, and buttock muscles do the work, not your back.

To and From High Places:

- To high places:
 - If possible, break up large loads into smaller, more manageable parts.
 - Bend your knees, lift the object, then straighten up.
 - Climb onto a sturdy platform, then put the object in its new location.
- From high places:
 - Stand on a sturdy platform; don't stretch up to get the object.
 - Push up on the load to judge its weight and stability.
 - If possible, divide the load into smaller parts before lifting.
 - Slide the load as close to your body as possible before lifting.
 - Make sure you have good footing and a good grip.
 - Climb down from platform to relocate the object.

Cont.

Safe Lifting—Special Situations, cont.

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- Make sure you have good footing and a good grip.
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Additional Discussion Notes

For in-depth training, attend one of CIRMA's Preventing Sprains and Strains or Back Injury Prevention Workshops.

Remember

Think before you lift—every time. Keeping in good shape makes good sense, and good sense is the cornerstone to safety.

Attendees _____