

LIFTING TECHNIQUES

Injuries caused by manual material handling are the most frequent type of on-the-job accidents. However, these injuries are preventable, and the following are some of the things you must do to avoid injury:

PREPARING FOR A LIFT

- Clear any movable obstacles out of your way and know where unmovable ones are.
- Cautiously lift the object you'll be moving to check its weight and center of gravity.

ALTERNATIVES TO LIFTING

For difficult lifting tasks, you should:

- Ask a co-worker for help.
- Use a pushcart or other material handling device.
- Pushing a load is easier on the back than pulling is. If you must pull something:
- Face the object squarely, with one foot at least 12 inches in front of the other.
- Keep your back straight, bend your knees slightly, and pull in one smooth motion.

PERFORMING THE LIFT

Performing the lift causes most on-the-job back injuries. The keys to safe and easy lifting are:

- Face the object squarely and get as close to it as possible.
- Balance yourself solidly, with one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Squat down, bending your knees. Keep your back straight and as nearly upright as possible.
- Grip the object firmly.
- Take a breath and hold it. Tighten your abdomen.
- Keeping your back straight, LIFT WITH YOUR LEGS to a standing position.
- Make the lift smoothly and under control.

CARRYING AND LOWERING

When carrying an object, grip it firmly and hold it as close to your body as possible.

- Use a safe technique for setting the load down.
- Keep your back straight.
- Tighten your abdomen.
- Bend at the knees.
- Whenever possible, store heavy loads off the floor.

SPECIAL DANGERS

- Don't lift objects over your head.
- Don't twist your body when lifting or setting down an object.
- Don't reach over an obstacle to make a lift. Move whatever is in your way or go around it.
- Don't carry a load that obstructs your vision.

