

Using Safe Moving Techniques

YOURSAFETY@IRP - TOOLBOX DISCUSSION

If your job requires you to lift, carry, push or pull objects, then make sure you use safe moving techniques. Individual workers can change the load on their back and risk of injury by using different lifting techniques, assisting devices, or both.

While the risk of injury when moving an object increases as the weight of the load increases, the risk comes not just from the weight of the object, but also the way it is handled, e.g. Twisting, reaching, repeating task frequently.

Key points to lifting:

- Plan the lift – where you're going, if an aid can be used, ensure a clear pathway etc;
- Make sure the load is balanced and stable;
- Make sure you have a good grip on the object;
- Tip: Dry hands are safe hands & using gloves can add grip;
- Abdominal muscles should be braced;
- Bend your knees, not your back and lift with your legs;
- Keep the load close to your body;
- Maintain the natural "S" shape curves of your spine - keeping your head up will help you see where you are going and maintain the curves of your spine;
- Move your feet to face the direction of the lift - don't twist your back;
- Don't hold your breath – Try to breath out when lifting/ pushing/pulling;
- Avoid walking backwards with a load;
- Only lift what you feel comfortable and confident to;
- Use a lifting aid or partner when lifting outside your safe comfort zone.

As an employee you have a responsibility to take care of your body:

- Ask for help or check what the procedure is for any new manual handling task;
- Use the equipment provided for your safety;
- Inform your supervisor if you see any dangerous manual task, don't put yourself and others at risk;
- Keep physically and mentally fit so that you can perform your job safely.

Other Points to Consider

- Use a trolley or mechanical aid if an object is awkward, heavy or when you have to carry something over a long distance;
- It is safer to push a load than pull it - When pushing, keep hands / object close to body and maintain an upright and neutral spine;
- Use leg muscles to push / pull;
- If you cannot avoid working in an awkward position, then you must take small regular breaks (~ 60 seconds) move out of the position and stretch.



Talk to your IRP consultant if you have any questions about safe manual handling within your duties – Tel. (08) 9477 7999