

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

## FACILITY AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

# MATERIAL HANDLING



## Injury Prevention

Manual material handling continues to be a leading cause of workplace injuries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, strains and sprains are among the most common job-related injuries. While not all injuries are preventable, many can be avoided by using proper lifting techniques and eliminating unnecessary risk.

### Proper lifting techniques

- Know your personal lifting limits.
- Understand the weight of the load before lifting.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Lift with your legs, not your back, and keep your spine straight.
- Avoid twisting or overreaching.
- Ask for assistance when needed.

### Best practice: eliminate manual lifting

The most effective way to prevent lifting injuries is to eliminate manual handling whenever possible. Consider:

- Planning tasks in advance to reduce unnecessary movement.
- Using engineering controls or mechanical aids (carts, dollies, lifts).
- Breaking loads into smaller, manageable quantities.

### Material storage tips

- Ensure floors are rated for the weight being stored.
- Keep aisles and walkways clear.
- Store incompatible materials separately (e.g., gas cylinders away from combustible materials).

There is a place for everything, and everything should be in its place. Proper storage, safe lifting techniques and asking for help when needed can significantly reduce the risk of injury on the job.



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