

:: Safe Material Handling ::

Handling material is a daily function in many workplaces. All too often, this task is taken for granted with little knowledge or attention given to the consequences if it is done incorrectly. All employees need to look at and evaluate how materials are handled inside and outside of their workplace. Whether the operation involves delivering or receiving material, an area should be designated for that purpose.

How the materials are loaded or unloaded is a key factor in reducing employee injuries. Persons involved in material handling should be able to lift and hold the weight of the material used in their operations. They must also be properly trained in the correct way to lift and carry the items. Remember, no matter how small or lightweight an item is, an injury can still occur if you move it incorrectly. Lifting, carrying or moving materials safely will decrease your chances of getting injured.

Keep in mind there are many times it is not necessary for an individual to lift and carry material manually. Various types of equipment—dolly, cart, forklift—are available to move material safely. Depending upon the type of operation, using a dolly or cart to move material can result in minimal disruption of work

flow and can also prevent injuries. However, only trained operators should use a powered pallet jack/lift truck or forklift. Pallet jacks can be used to carry heavier loads from one area to another. It is imperative that materials are placed on the jack in a safe and secure manner to avoid having the load shift, fall off, roll over or impair the operator's vision. You should only operate a pallet jack, lift truck or forklift if you have received the necessary training in safe operation and control.

Remembering the tips given in the attachment, as well as other information you may have been provided with in the past, will allow you to handle materials safely and avoid injuries.