

Safe Lifting Guidelines

Lifting is an important component of nearly every job. Whether it's in an auto dealership, on a delivery truck or in a factory, the ability to perform a lift safely is critical to health and well-being. The following information is offered as a guide to safe lifting techniques.

1. Plan the move before lifting; remove obstructions from your chosen pathway.
2. Test the weight of the load before lifting by pushing the load along its resting surface.
3. If the load is too heavy or bulky, use lifting and carrying aids such as hand trucks, dollies, pallet jacks and carts, or get assistance from a co-worker.
4. If assistance is required to perform a lift, coordinate and communicate your movements with those of your co-worker.
5. Face the load and position your feet 6 to 12 inches apart (approximately shoulder width) with one foot slightly in front of the other.
6. Bend at the knees, not at the back.
7. Keep your back straight.
8. Get a firm grip on the object with your hands and fingers. Use handles when present.
9. Never lift anything if your hands are greasy or wet.
10. Wear protective gloves when lifting objects with sharp corners or jagged edges.
11. Hold objects as close to your body as possible.
12. Perform lifting movements smoothly and gradually; do not jerk the load.
13. If you must change direction while lifting or carrying the load, pivot your feet and turn your entire body. Do not twist at the waist.
14. Set down objects in the same manner as you picked them up, except in reverse.
15. Do not lift an object from the floor to a level above your waist in one motion. Set the load down on a table or bench and then adjust your grip before lifting it higher.
16. Slide materials to the end of the tailgate before attempting to lift them off of a pick-up truck. Do not lift over the walls or tailgate of the truck bed.

For additional information, check out the following links:

- OSHA: www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics
- NIOSH: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics

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