

# Proper Lifting Techniques

## Safety Meeting Packet

### Protect Your Workforce



Lifting is a common cause of workplace injuries and can affect multiple body parts, including the wrist, elbow, shoulder, and back. When employees use safe lifting techniques and adjust tasks to eliminate or reduce the physical demands of lifting, they are less likely to sustain injuries related to lifting. The main goal of safe lifting is to maintain the back's natural posture while lifting items.

- Work in teams; one employee lifts and holds items while the other assembles.
- Take regular breaks and break tasks into shorter segments.
- Plan work activities so employees can limit the time they spend holding loads.

### Lifting Assistance

Lifting loads over 50 pounds increases the risk of injury. Utilizing lifting assistance can reduce strain on the body.

- Pallet jacks and hand trucks.
- Team lift heavy or awkwardly shaped loads.
- Wear a back belt.
- Mechanical means such as forklifts or material lifts.
- Suction devices can be used to lift materials with smooth, flat surfaces.
- Ramps or lift gates to load machinery into trucks.



### High Frequency or Long Duration

Holding items for a long period of time, even if loads are light, increases the risk of back and shoulder injuries, since muscles can be starved of nutrients and waste products can build up.

- Use a template made of a lightweight material to mark holes for drilling when mounting heavy items.
- Provide stands, jigs, or mechanical lifting devices such as duct/material lifts to hold large, awkward materials in place for fastening.
- Rotate tasks so employees are not exposed to the same activity for a long period of time.

### Proper Lifting Techniques

Bending and reaching while lifting causes unnecessary strain on the spine and back muscles.

- Place materials that are to be manually lifted at "power zone" height, about mid-thigh to mid-chest.
- Maintain neutral and straight spine alignment whenever possible. Usually bending at the knees instead of the waist helps maintain proper spine alignment.
- Hold the load close, and keep the elbows as close to the body as possible.
- Place heavy objects on shelves, tables, or racks to minimize bending and reaching.
- Avoid twisting, especially when bending forward. Turn by moving the feet rather than twisting the torso.
- Keep the vertical distance of lifts between mid-thigh and shoulder height.
- Use ladders or aerial lifts to elevate employees and move them closer to the work area to minimize overhead reaching.
- Break down loads into smaller units and carry one in each hand to equalize loads. Use buckets with handles or similar devices to carry loose items.
- Optimize employee access to heavy items through good housekeeping and preplanning.
- Use roll-out decks in truck beds to bring materials closer to the employee and eliminate the need to crawl into the back of a truck.



## Handholds

Inadequate handholds make lifting more difficult, move the load away from the body, increasing the risk of contact stress and of dropping the load.

- Utilize proper handholds, including handles, slots, or holes, with enough room to accommodate gloved hands.
- Ask suppliers to place their materials in containers with proper handholds.
- Move materials from containers with poor handholds or without handholds into containers with good handholds.
- Wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid finger injuries and contact stress. Ensure that gloves fit properly and provide adequate grip to reduce the chance of dropping the load.

## Environmental Factors

Modifications to the work environment can also impact the ability to lift safely.

- Cold temperatures can cause decreased muscle flexibility, which can result in muscle pulls.
- Excessively hot temperatures can lead to dehydration, fatigue, and increased metabolic load.
- Adjust work schedules to minimize exposure to extreme temperatures.
- Low visibility or poor lighting increases the chance of trips and falls.



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For more information, review NIOSH Publication Number 94-110.

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# Proper Lifting Techniques Safety Meeting Attendance Acknowledgement

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department / Division \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM  
 Meeting Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name & Title of Individual Conducting Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Meeting Discussion Points / Important Reminders:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Internal Procedures Reviewed:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this document, you confirm your attendance at the meeting and acknowledge the issues addressed above!**

Employees in Attendance		
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
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(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____

Employees not present: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions/Recommendations to improve workplace safety and health: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Disclaimer:**

The information provided above was assembled using multiple resources. However, these materials do not contain ALL the information available regarding the required safety standards under local, provincial, state, or federal law for your industry.

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