

**SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**MANUAL HANDLING**

**Take care and plan ahead when moving or lifting heavy objects.
Avoid awkward postures and excessive force.**

Consider wearing work gloves when handling abrasive materials.



Appropriate protective footwear with substantial uppers must be worn.

## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

◼ Awkward posture ◼ Duration of task ◼ Sustained grip ◼ Slip/trip/fall

◼ Sprains/strains ◼ Heavy loads ◼ Crushing fingers ◼ Back strain

◼ Dropping equipment/objects

#### PRE-OPERATIONAL SAFETY CHECKS

1. Plan your activity before you start:

◼ Reduce the number of times objects are moved

◼ Identify weight, size and recommended handling instructions for all relevant objects

◼ Reduce bending or reaching by storing objects at waist height

◼ Allocate sufficient time and staff to complete activities.

◼ Check route for clearances and obstacles. Confirm the route if team lifting.

1. Wear non-slip, fully enclosed shoes suited to the task.
2. Use a lifting aid (Pallet jack, flat bed trolley, chair trolley or library trolley, etc.) whenever possible.
3. Break down large and heavy loads into more manageable sizes and weights.
4. Keep the arms and elbows close to the body.

**OPERATIONAL SAFETY CHECKS**

**Lifting loads by yourself**

1. Know your limits. Test the load to ensure that you can handle it safely especially if the load is too heavy or has an awkward shape. If you cannot manage or you are not sure, ASK FOR ASSISTANCE.
2. Use your body weight to start the load moving if using a trolley. Push rather than pull whenever possible.
3. Use a wide stance and make sure you have a firm footing.
4. Tighten your stomach muscles.
5. DO NOT hold your breath – exhale at the moment of greatest exertion.
6. Make certain your balance is good and you have a good grip. Watch where you are going.
7. Keep the load close to your body to reduce strain and keep the heaviest side of the load next to your body to avoid uneven forces on the spine.
8. Keep your head level and trunk tall to maintain the spine’s natural curvature.
9. Lift steadily with your legs – NOT YOUR BACK.
10. Keep your shoulders level and facing in the same direction as your hips.
11. Point your feet in the direction of the move – DO NOT TWIST. Take extra care with awkward loads.
12. Place the load down by using your leg muscles and maintaining the spine’s natural curve as much as possible.

**Team lifting** *(Team lifting should only be used as an interim control measure until the task can be completed using mechanical equipment)*.

1. Use mechanical aids whenever possible before resorting to team lifting.
2. Ensure the lifters are of similar height and capability where possible for team lifting.
3. Ensure the number of lifters is in proportion to the weight of the load and the difficulty of the lift.
4. One individual needs to be responsible for coordinating, planning and communicating during the lift the lift. Ensure team members know their responsibilities during the lift, including what to do in case of an emergency.
5. Ensure there is enough space is available for the handlers to manoeuvre as a group
6. Lift the load simultaneously so the load is shared equally and will not shift to one person.
7. Walk in step to avoid tripping. Avoid team lifting on routes that travel steps or on slopes where most of the weight will be borne by the handler at the lower end.

#### HOUSEKEEPING

◼ Keep work area clean and clutter-free.

◼ Clean, service and store any equipment used to transport the load.

This SOP does not necessarily cover all possible hazards associated with the tool and should be used in conjunction with other references. It is designed to be used as an adjunct to teaching Safety Procedures and to act as a reminder to users prior to tool use.

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