

# Material Handling

## Move the Load Safely



The summer months tend to be a time when school classrooms are torn apart, cleaned and reassembled. During that process your Insurance Group has observed a higher incidence of material handling related injuries.

During this time period of heavy work, a reminder on safe lifting and material handling techniques may save someone from the pain and disability associated with these types of injuries. The following tips can help you move the load safely and protect your back from stress, strain and potential injury.

### Safe Lifting

Safe lifting means keeping your back aligned and balanced when lifting. Most standard loads under 50 pounds can be lifted and carried safely by following these steps. You begin by bending from the knees (not the waist), tucking your pelvis and tightening your stomach muscles. You then hug the load close to you, and gradually lift yourself up using the strong muscles in your legs. When carrying the object, be sure not to twist or bend. Then, bend at the knees and slowly slide the load down your body until you can comfortably put the load down.

### Mechanical Aids

Not all loads can (or should) be lifted by you or your co-workers.

Carts, bins, hand trucks, dollies, and fork lifts are

all mechanical aids that can help transport a load without putting undue strain on your back.

Pushcarts and bins can be useful for light, awkward loads, while hand trucks and fork-lifts can help move heavier, stackable material. When using mechanical aids, be sure that the load is secured in place before moving, and be sure to push the device rather than pulling it.

### Tips to Remember

Whenever you lift or transport materials, keep these tips in mind. You'll place less stress on your back, and will get the job done safely.

- » Always wear shoes or boots with firm, slip-resistant soles.
- » Make sure your path is clear and well-lighted before lifting or moving the load.
- » Know where to put the load down *before* you lift it.
- » Never hurry when carrying a load.
- » Organize your work area to reduce unnecessary lifting or moving.
- » Check the condition of mechanical aids *before* loading. Are nuts, bolts, or moving parts properly adjusted? Are wheels stable and in good condition?
- » Be safe, you won't be sorry. ☀