

Safety Talks



NATIONAL INDEPENDENT BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Lifting and Handling Office Materials

The Load

Size of the load is not the only factor to consider in materials handling. How often you lift, how high you have to lift, how far you carry a load, and where you finally put it down are also important.

The weight that a person may safely lift varies from person to person. You should never attempt to pick up a load that is heavier than you can manage. Get a buddy or use a mechanical lift. The size of the load is important. We've all heard the sayings "lift with your legs, not your back" and "bend your knees, not your back." That is generally good advice, but to follow it, you have to get the center of the load close to your body. A bulky load is harder to lift than a small load of the same weight because we can't get the center of the load close to our body.

The Lift

- Stay in good physical shape! Don't underestimate the importance of being in good physical shape.
- Size up the load! Never lift more than you can comfortably handle.
- Reduce the size of the load or get help.
- The safest lifting zone is an area between your knees and your shoulders. Picking an item off the floor or lifting an item higher than your shoulders places a greater strain on your body.
- Position feet firmly with one foot beside the load to be lifted, and the other just in front of the load.
- Get a firm grip on the load, with your fingers under it if possible.
- Prepare your back, legs, hips, hands and arms to take the load.
- Keep the load close to you. Avoid reaching as you lift.

Picking up, moving, and placing of office materials, such as shipping boxes, files, large books, copy machine paper, cash draws, etc., involves the handling of different size, shape

and weight materials. It is likely something we all do every day, and without thinking. Lifting improperly often results in injury. You don't have to be involved in materials handling very long to discover there is a hard way and an easier way to do things.

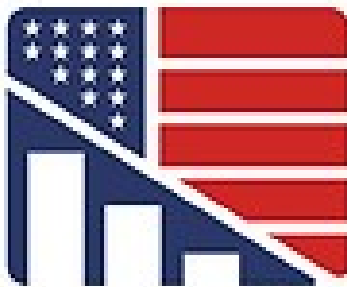
To make materials handling safer and easier, look at the load, your footing and your hands to see if there could be a problem.

- ⌘ Lift slowly and gradually. Do not make sudden jerking motions.
- ⌘ Never twist at the waist. Move your feet to change direction or turn.
- ⌘ Walk slowly, keeping the load in front of you and turn by moving your feet.
- ⌘ Put the load down slowly, again if possible, placing it no lower than your knees.
- ⌘ Again, keep the load close to you. Avoid reaching as the load is lowered.

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info@nibausa.com

1-844.252.1344

WWW.NIBAUSA.COM