



## Moving Materials Around the Work Site

Handling materials is important. Materials have to be available when and where they're needed or the project stops. Whether you move materials by hand or with equipment like forklifts, you have to follow safe work practices. If you don't, you open yourself up to all kinds of accidents and injuries. Here are some examples: Back injuries from improper lifting; bruises and fractures from falling materials; slips and trips caused by loose parts and sloppy stacks; amputation or death from being crushed by a forklift. When you have to move materials around the jobsite today, make a plan before you begin. Here is a NIOSH-based checklist that will help you avoid having an accident:

- Do you have to move materials over a long distance? If so, consider using a mechanical device to move them or at least to get them closer to the final destination.
- Are walking surfaces level, wide enough and clean enough? Is there enough room for you to maneuver while moving the object? If not, consider finding another route, or clearing the path before you move the object.
- Do you have an unobstructed view of the path ahead? If not, consider asking a co-worker to act as a spotter.
- Is the item to be moved awkward, bulky, or heavy? If it is, ask a co-worker (or a couple co-workers) to help you.
- Can you hold the objects without having them slip from your grasp? If not, use a container or make several trips with smaller loads.
- Do you need to wear gloves to carry the item? If so, be sure they fit properly and that they allow you to grip and hold the item safely.
- Consider your footwear. Would your feet be injured if you dropped the item? If so, you may need to change into steel-toed boots.
- When you're tired or hurt, do you try to push through the pain and discomfort? If you're too tired, take a break before you hurt yourself or others. If you're injured, tell you supervisor and see a doctor.
- Have you been trained to lift, carry, put down, and store materials safely? If not, see your supervisor and get the safety training you need.
- Are carts, dollies, forklifts, or hoists available to help move materials? If so, use them, but use them properly and safely.

When handling materials by hand, you should try to avoid:

1. **lifting below knee height and above shoulder height**
2. **reaching to lift or place a load**



3. **holding a load for a long time**
4. **sudden movements**
5. **twisting at the waist.**

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Store materials securely and safely so they don't fall, slide, collapse, or spill.**