



Public Sector Safety Talks—APERMA

Back Injury Prevention and Material Handling

Before you lift something, ask yourself these questions:

- How heavy is the load?
- Should I ask for help?
- Can it be moved mechanically with available equipment?
- Is it in an accessible position?
- Is my pathway clear?
- Will I be able to see where I am going?
- Is there a safe way to grip the load?



Lift correctly:

- Your footing is a very important part of lifting. Your feet should be:
 1. Close to the object.
 2. Shoulder-width apart for good balance.
 3. Kept with one foot slightly ahead of the other to help keep your center of gravity under control.
- Bend your knees and go down to a crouch - not to a full squat. It takes double the effort to stand up from a full squat as it does from a crouch.
- Keep your back as straight and vertical as possible.
- Get a good, firm grip. Do not lift until your hold is strong and slip-proof.
- Lift up by straightening your legs. Keep the load close to your body.
- If you have to change direction, don't twist your body; move your feet as you turn.
- When setting the load down:
 1. Keep your back straight.
 2. Bend your knees just as you did when you lifted the object.

Be extra careful if you have not lifted recently:

Muscles can weaken and tighten while you are away on weekends, vacations, or sick-days, so use extra caution on your first day back. Your physical condition and muscle stretching and toning are important *before* lifting begins each day.

Be smart:

If your load can be moved mechanically or if you can simply ask someone to help you, take that advantage and don't risk injuring your back.

Please feel free to contact Jim Bergemann or Kathi Williams at 800-274-2788 with any questions regarding the above material.

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