



## ***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 800-274-2888 with any questions regarding the above material.**

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