



Safe Lifting Techniques

Progressive Fleet, the National Safety Council and various other safety and medical organizations recommend using the following techniques to perform a safe lift to prevent injuries.



- **Before you lift**, inspect your intended path of travel for obstacles or other possible hazards. Make sure that you have a clear path to carry the load, can see where you are going, and have a clear area to set it down.
- **Size up the load before you lift it.** Test the weight by moving a corner of the object and decide whether you can handle it alone or if you need help.
- **Get a firm footing.** Place your feet shoulders' width apart with one foot slightly forward of the other.
- **Bend at your knees, not your waist**, to get your legs and feet ready to support the load. This is the single most important part of lifting.
- **Straighten your legs to lift straight up in a slow, smooth motion.**
- **Keep the load close to your body.** For greater strength and stability, lift and carry the object near your waist.
- **Move your feet when changing directions.** Turning with your upper body while carrying the load causes strains. Bend your knees again as you lower the load.
- **Ask for help for lifting items that are long, bulky, don't have a good place to grip or are too heavy for one person.** If you have to strain to carry the load, you need assistance.
- **Know when mechanical lifting equipment**, such as a dolly or forklift, should be used. Follow company guidelines for your personal lifting weight limits.
- **If possible, divide a heavy load into several smaller ones.**
- **If possible, avoid walking on slippery, uneven surfaces while carrying any load.**
- **Don't rely on a back belt to protect your back.** When used improperly, they can actually damage your back.
- **Let your leg muscles do the work.** They are stronger than any other muscle in your body.
- **Do not arch your back.** This makes the nerve roots open to pinching and cause strains in weaker muscles.

FOR LOADS REQUIRING TWO PEOPLE TO LIFT:

- **Designate a leader in advance.**
- **Plan the lift** and use all safe lifting procedures.
- **Lift and lower** in unison and with no sudden moves.
- **Communicate with your partner** during the entire move.