

Moving Bulky or Heavy Materials

Have you ever been at the fitness center and watched someone try to lift weights that are obviously just way too heavy for them? That's always a bad idea. The same goes for any lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying in an office environment too. We call these activities "manual handling." And improper manual handling can cause work-related musculoskeletal disorders such as pain and injuries to arms, legs and joints, and repetitive strain injuries.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

There will be times when you assess the object and its destination and realize you need additional assistance. That is fine and there's no reason to let pride stand in your way. We promise that no one expects you to be a superhero and lift all the boxes all at once. Do not attempt to lift anything beyond your capabilities. And always ask for people to assist you when needed.

Dollies or Carts

There are also many tools at your disposal to utilize to ensure a safe move. For example, use a cart, dolly or hand truck if:

- You are uncomfortable with the weight
- The package is an awkward or irregular shape
- The package weighs over 25 pounds
- Two hands are need to carry it, regardless of size, weight or shape
- It obstructs the view of your feet or where you are going, regardless of size, shape, or weight

Team Talks are intended to provide ready-to-use content for facilitated safety discussions on key topics. Whether you use this copy as an exact script, or as a set of talking points for creating your own talk, is up to you. We hope it provides a useful starting point for discussion. As always, we would love to hear feedback on how your talk goes, and what more we can do to support you in creating a true culture of safety.

The Redwoods Group

You should use a two-wheeled dolly or hand truck if the path over which the material must be moved involves steps or stairs. The last thing you need to be doing is lifting a heavy box up a flight of stairs. Be sure the material is strapped or clamped to the conveyance and ask for assistance if significant weight is involved. A large-wheeled cart or dolly should be used for movement over irregular surfaces such as grass, gravel, etc.

We get lots of deliveries and shipments and supplies around here. We need you in good health not just to lift whatever came through the door today, as there will doubtless be more deliveries tomorrow. There is never any shame in asking for help or using tools to get the stuff where it needs to go.

Are you ready to take a quick true or false quiz on moving bulky or heavy materials?

If something requires two hands to carry it, you should use a cart, dolly or hand truck.

TRUE

If you can't see around the object you are moving, it's ok to carry it if a co-worker directs you on where to go.

FALSE

If an object is really heavy for you but you're only moving it a short distance, it's ok to move without a cart, dolly or hand truck.

FALSE