

# SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE

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## Task / Equipment Description: Manual handling of large or heavy items

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### Potential Hazards:

- Crush
- Equipment failure
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Falling objects
- Slips, trips and falls
- Pinch and squash

### ALWAYS

Determine whether a mechanical aid can be used (such as a fork lift, trolley) and ensure it is in good condition and maintained.

Know your limitations.

Plan for the lift/move.

Know the weight of the object to be lifted.

Store heavy items at waist height.

Ask for assistance when you need it.

### NEVER

Rush or take shortcuts.

Lift more than you can without injury.

### Safe Operating Procedure:

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#### 1. Pre-Operation – Safety Checks

- Plan your work before you start.
  - Reduce the number of times you move items;
  - Know the weight, size and recommended handling instructions;
  - Avoid bending or reaching (items should be stored at waist height);
  - Allow enough time to do the job;
  - Make sure there is a clear path.
  - Wear non-slip, enclosed and supportive footwear (done up).
  - Use a mechanical aid when possible eg trolley, pallet jack etc.
  - If possible, break down large and heavy loads into more manageable sizes and weights eg taking half the items out of a large heavy box.
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- Work and move with your arms and elbows close to your body.
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## 2. Operation – Safety Procedure

### **Single person lift:**

- Test the load to make sure you can handle it without injury. If you can't, ask for help (see team lift).
- If using a trolley, put your body weight behind it – push rather than pull.
- To lift:
  - Stand with feet shoulder width apart;
  - Move in close to the load;
  - Bend your knees, keep your head upright and maintain the spine's natural curves (don't arch your back);
  - Pull the load close to your body;
  - Secure your grip;
  - Use a smooth controlled motion to lift the load, using your leg muscles to do the work;
  - Avoid twisting or turning your body when lifting.
  - Keep your back straight and stomach muscles tight.
  - When you move, watch where you are going and point your feet in the direction you are going – don't twist your body.
- To lower the load:
  - Stand with your feet apart and in a staggered stance;
  - Get as close as possible to the area you will place the load;
  - Keep the load close to your body;
  - Bend your knees, keep your head upright and spine natural and lower the load; and
  - When the load is securely placed, release your grip.

### **Team / two-person lift:**

- If possible, lift with people of similar height and capability.
- Make sure there are appropriate numbers of lifters for the weight/size of the load.
- Nominate one person as the leader for the lift – they will coordinate and direct the lift.
- Make sure all lifters know what the task is – how to lift, where to move, etc.
- Make sure there is enough room for all the lifters to move as a group.
- Lift simultaneously – the leader should direct this.
- Walk in step and use direct routes, preferably not up/down slopes or stairs.
- Lower the load simultaneously.

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## 3. Post-Operation

- Remove any rubbish to keep the work area clear of trip hazards.
- Return any mechanical aids to their storage location.
- Report any damage or faults to equipment.
- Ensure that workers have appropriate rest breaks.