

## Safe operating procedure – general manual handling

POLICY NUMBER

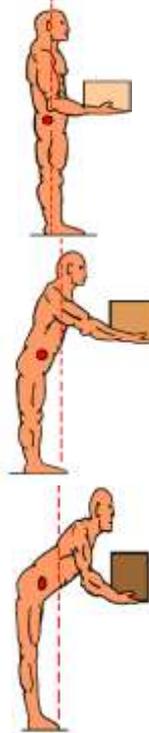
17.1.5

POLICY GROUP

WH&S – Internal Safe Operating Procedures

**Manual Handling** means any activity requiring the use of force extended by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise hold or restrain an object. To prevent back injuries, use correct procedures for lifting and get help whenever necessary, as described in this SOP.

Manual handling injuries often involve such things as lifting and carrying a load. Even a light load or excessive and frequent bending, twisting or awkward posture can result in a manual handling injury. Always use lifting and carrying aids provided. If unsure seek assistance and / or advice.

<p><b>Maximum Comfort Zone</b></p> <p>Handle boxes and materials within the maximum comfort zone, which is roughly the area just below the shoulders and just above the knees. Repeatedly lifting or carrying objects above shoulder height can put unnecessary strain on the neck and shoulders. Moving objects that are low to the ground (such as items on the bottom shelf of a storage rack) can put strain on the lower back.</p>	
<p><b>Preparation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that you are wearing proper clothing and PPE</li> <li>• Steel toe shoes should always be worn when lifting heavy items</li> <li>• Gloves are also recommended when lifting certain objects</li> <li>• Stretch before you attempt to lift a heavy object or at beginning of shift</li> <li>• If possible, store materials at waist height to reduce the strain on your back</li> <li>• Have materials delivered as close to final destination as possible</li> <li>• Assess the object you are going to be lifting</li> <li>• Determine the weight of the object before lifting</li> <li>• Determine best place to grip the object</li> <li>• Ensure that your travel path is free of slipping and tripping hazards</li> <li>• Know your own lifting restrictions and capabilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Get Help:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use carts, dollies, forklifts and hoists to move materials (ensure operator is trained / licensed)</li> <li>• When lifting an awkward or heavy load, get help from another worker</li> <li>• Use carrying tools with handles to carry odd-shaped loads</li> </ul> <p><b>Proper Lifting Techniques:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your feet spread about shoulders-width apart.</li> <li>• Your feet should be close to the object.</li> <li>• Get a firm grip on the object.</li> <li>• Keep your back straight and elbows close to your body.</li> <li>• Keeping your back straight and head up, straighten your legs to lift object</li> <li>• At the same time tighten your stomach muscles to provide back support (don't hold your breath while doing this)</li> <li>• While carrying the object DO NOT twist or bend at the waist, move your feet and legs when turning.</li> <li>• Keep the load as close to your body as possible</li> <li>• To set the object down, use the same technique used to lift the object</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Useful Safety Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your time! You are more likely to be injured when you are tired or cold</li> <li>• Lift as smoothly as possible, try not to "jerk" the lift</li> </ul>	 <p>Proper Lifting Technique Keep back straight and lift with the legs</p>

**CAUTION** – Avoid lifting heavy and awkward loads; excessive or frequent bending and twisting of the body; and awkward posture while lifting and carrying.

### RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES