

LOSS CONTROL TOPIC

LIFTING AND HANDLING

Lifting and handling accidents are the third most frequent causes of injuries to employees of financial institutions, right behind slip, trip or fall and repetitive motion injuries. The term “Lifting and Handling” includes the activities of; pushing, pulling, carrying, lowering, holding, dragging and supporting objects. In the typical depository institution environment, employees encounter many situations requiring lifting and handling activities. These may include, for example, lifting and moving bags or boxes of coins and boxes of supplies or placing or removing files from file cabinets. Housekeeping activities are also a source of frequent injury from activities such as lifting trash bags or moving furniture. The typical injury sustained would be a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) to the back, neck, hips, arms or legs. There are a few simple precautions that, if taken, can dramatically reduce the incidence of MSI injuries in the workplace:

- Do not attempt to move or lift an object that is above your head. This usually occurs when an object is being removed from an upper shelf. When the object slides free, it can rapidly fall, causing you to strain your upper arms and body trying to stop the object. Use a step stool to put your shoulders at the same level as the object
- Do not attempt to lift or move anything when you are leaning forward from the waist at more than a 30 degree angle. This can cause severe strain to the lower back and can occur from something as simple as leaning over to lift a stack of papers from a wide desk
- Do not lift any object over 25 pounds in weight without assistance. The amount of weight that can be comfortably lifted can vary greatly from person to person, so the maximum safe lifting weight can be much less
- Avoid stooped or twisted positions when moving objects and never lift anything from a kneeling position. Try to keep your body positioned straight in front of the object to be moved
- When lifting an object from below, bend your knees and keep your feet apart with one leg slightly forward for balance. Keep your back straight

and tuck your chin in. Grip the object with both hands, keep it close to your body and lift with your legs



- Push, rather than pull carts or any wheeled object. Make sure that there are no bumps or defects in the floor that can cause a sudden lurch or jarring stop
- When possible, bags or boxes of coins should be delivered by the armored car service to a raised surface where they can be slid to a cart for transport. Lift tables can be utilized to raise coin bags or boxes to desired heights

Source Materials

OSHA Technical Manuals www.osha.gov/dts

Mayo Clinic, Adult Health, Slide Show: Protect your back while lifting.
www.mayoclinic.com

Center for Disease Control, NIOSH, Lifting Equation 97-117
www.cdc.gov/NIOSH

Cornell University, Ergonomics <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu>

These discussions are not intended to represent a comprehensive review of all of the possible causes and preventive measures for lifting and handling injuries, but are offered for general information purposes. For a more detailed study, please refer to the source materials above.

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