

It's a fact...

You can identify the characteristics of a hazardous materials-handling task.

A poorly designed materials-handling task is one where the strength requirements to complete the task exceed the strength capabilities of most workers. Simply put, most workers would not be able to perform the task without overexertion.

Poorly designed tasks generally require workers to lift, lower, push, pull, or carry heavy loads. These tasks may also include excessive bending, reaching, or twisting of the body.

A task is potentially hazardous if it includes one or more of the following activities:

- ◆ Lifting or lowering an item with one hand or rough, jerking motions rather than with a two-handed, smooth motion.
- ◆ Lifting, lowering, or carrying bulky objects that cannot be held close to the body.
- ◆ Handling or lifting materials more than three or four times per minute during an 8-hour work shift.
- ◆ Lifting or lowering between the floor and mid-thigh.
- ◆ Lifting or lowering above shoulder height.
- ◆ Lifting or lowering objects in cramped work areas that may result in twisting the torso (e.g., lifting and twisting in one motion).
- ◆ Exerting forces in awkward positions—to the side, overhead, or at extended reaches.



Save your back for tomorrow. Use material-handling equipment or get help—ask someone to assist you.



Use hoists or other equipment for lifting to make the job easier, faster, and safer.

- ◆ Handling difficult-to-grasp items (e.g., with no handles).
- ◆ Handling items that place high pressure on the hands from thin edges, such as pail handles or sheet-metal edges.
- ◆ Pushing or pulling items, such as carts or boxes, that require large breakaway forces to get started.
- ◆ Lifting and carrying items on walkways that are obstructed, poorly illuminated, slippery, too narrow, or congested with vehicle and/or pedestrian traffic.

Finding Solutions to Safely Performing Materials-Handling Tasks



Fact Sheet 7: You should know how to safely perform *lifting* and *lowering* tasks.

Fact Sheet 8: You should know how to safely perform *pushing* and *pulling* tasks.

Fact Sheet 9: You should know how to safely *carry* heavy loads.



This fact sheet is a product of the DoD Ergonomics Working Group and was adapted from their June 2000 publication, *Preventing Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace*.

Written for both supervisors and workers, this fact sheet provides basic information on ergonomics. For more information, visit the working group's web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ergowg/product.htm>.