



Safety Tips Sheet No. 5: Employee Guidelines for Safe Carrying and Transporting Loads

Safe carrying and transporting of loads will avoid workplace injuries and will increase the ability of a worker to safely and properly perform a job.

This is the 5th in a series of Safety Tips Sheets developed by the Crane, Hoist and Monorail Alliance concerning safe moving of loads. The content was developed by Ergonomic Assist Systems and Equipment (EASE), which is a Council in the Material Handling Industry of America.

Employee Guidelines for Safe Carrying and Transporting of Loads:

1. The use of stretching is appropriate as part of a comprehensive ergonomic program. Stretching must not be used in place of engineering and/or administrative improvements.
2. Check for tags on loads.
3. Before carrying, always test the load for stability and weight.
4. For long trips or loads that are unstable and/or heavy, follow management guidelines for:
 - Equipment use.
 - Reducing the weight of the load.
 - Repacking containers to increase stability.
5. Plan before carrying:
 - Wear appropriate shoes to avoid slips, trips or falls.
 - If you wear gloves, choose the size that fits properly. Depending on the material the gloves are made of and the number of pairs worn at once, more force may be needed to grasp and hold objects. For example, wearing a single pair of heat resistant gloves can reduce your grip strength up to 40 percent. Wearing two or more pairs of gloves at once can reduce your grip strength up to 60 percent.
 - Avoid carrying large or bulky loads that limit or obstruct your vision.
 - Slide, push or roll instead of carrying when appropriate.
 - When there is a choice, push instead of pull.
 - Carry only as much as you can safely handle by yourself.
 - Try to avoid slopes, stairs, or other obstacles that make carrying materials more difficult.
 - Beware of and try to avoid slippery floors (e.g. liquids, ice, oil, and fine powders).
 - Use extra caution when moving loads that may be unstable.
6. When carrying:
 - Keep loads close to your body.
 - Make sure you have a clear view of the path.
 - When carrying containers with one hand, alternate hands.
 - Whenever appropriate, use two hands to carry containers.
 - Alternate heavy or forceful exertion tasks with less physically demanding tasks.

For additional information and safe carrying and transporting practices, please refer to links in the MHIA website <http://www.mhia.org/>. The Ergonomics Guidelines for Manual Material Handling provides illustrations for the safe carrying and transporting of loads. For a complete copy published by the EASE Council, please visit www.mhia.org/ease.