



## Tip Sheet No. 9: When and Why to use Overhead Lifting as Opposed to Manual Lifting

*This is the 9<sup>th</sup> in a series of Safety Tips Sheets developed by the Crane, Hoist and Monorail Alliance concerning safe application and operation of moving loads.*

- **When** the load is more than 35 lbs.
  - **Why:** Lifting loads of more than 35 lbs generally will increase the risk of physical injury.
- **When** the load must be handled using extended or elevated reaches away from the body or in locations that require torso bending.
  - **Why:** When loads are handled away from the body it increases stress on the shoulders and back. Bending the torso forces the back to support the weight of the load and the weight of the upper body generally will increase the risk of physical injury.
- **When** the load is lifted with high repetition (multiple times per hour)
  - **Why:** High frequency lifting leads to worker fatigue, poor technique, and possible injury.
- **When** the load is regularly transported more than 20 feet
  - **Why:** Transporting loads more than 20 feet can induce worker fatigue and increase the potential of injury. Manually transporting loads can increase contact injuries or tripping hazards.
- **When** the floor space is limited
  - **Why:** Congested work areas increase the chance of tripping hazards and/or contact injuries from running into other items in the work space. Keeping the lifting solution overhead does not require floor space and will allow a work area to be better organized.
- **When** more than one person is required to lift a heavy load
  - **Why:** If two workers are involved because an item is extremely heavy, there is greater potential that one or both could be injured due to poor hand hold, insufficient room for access, or unequal distribution of the load.

For additional information and safe lifting practices, please refer to links in the MHIA website <http://www.mhia.org/> . For a complete copy of the Ergonomics Guidelines for Manual Material Handling published by the EASE Council, please visit [www.mhia.org/ease](http://www.mhia.org/ease) . This guideline shows examples of the alternatives for manual handling.