

Using Material Handling Equipment Safely

Introduction:

Material handling equipment reduces physical effort, making it easier and safer to handle heavy objects. They are used in many industries to provide aid when certain items are too heavy to lift without assistance. Each year serious injuries or death occur as a result of using unsafe lifting equipment. It's the employers' responsibility to provide several different types of lifting devices for workers to use depending on the weight and shape of the item lifted.

Discussion Points:

- Use material handling equipment when items are too heavy to lift without assistance
- It's the employers' responsibility to provide lifting equipment for workers to use
- Employees should be trained before using material handling equipment
- Do not take unnecessary risks and always use safe work practices
- Use material handling equipment to reduce risk of injury or death

Discussion:

Different types of containers and materials need to be moved from one place to another in the workplace every day. Workers should select material handling equipment to assist in moving heavy objects. The worker must receive training before using the equipment to perform the task. Training should include inspecting, operating, and maintaining the equipment. Visually inspect the equipment for any defects such as damaged or missing parts. If equipment is defective, tag it and remove it from service. If a device fails during operation, immediately stop using it and report it to your supervisor. Do not take unnecessary risks and always use safe work practices. Use a hand truck to move a large object that is too heavy to lift by hand. Using a platform truck may be more appropriate for moving an irregularly shaped, heavy object. When selecting a device, check the rated lifting capacity of the material handling equipment and ensure that it equals or exceeds the load it will support. If the load slips off the device, do not attempt to catch it. Move away and let it fall. Never reach under a load when working with it, and never work under a load.

OSHA does not set standards for maximum lifting weight limits. Companies should determine the maximum safe lifting weight and document it in the safety plan. If you have questions, contact the manufacturer of the material handling equipment. Employees should use lifting devices as much as possible to reduce the risk of injury or death.

As always, stay safe out there!

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