

Home Storage

Using proper and efficient storage techniques at home will reduce the chances of back injuries, while at the same time easing your “home workload.”

As you would at work, use wall brackets, shelving, and other storage systems in order to put materials at the right height. This will reduce bending, stretching, or twisting.

When you lift materials, always bend at the knees and transfer more of the weight of the package to your leg muscles. This will reduce the strain on your back.

When lifting and storing groceries, you and family members should take care to share the work, move carefully, and take your time. Many injuries and household incidents occur when the task is being hurried.

For major jobs around the home or while doing outside jobs, such as building a garage, rent or hire equipment that will ease the workload. Keep children away and make sure the operator has safety in mind.

For lighter jobs, use tools that may help, including dollies, wheelbarrows, ropes, or belts. For example, don't move that filing cabinet down the stairs unless you have helpers and/or the right equipment.

Whatever the task, don't let your family see you doing it the wrong way. Remember, you know the rules best—so bring your safety attitude home from work with you.

A Good Safety Record

Manual material handling incidents and falls are frequent. Workers' compensation claims in this area are high.

Improved materials handling systems lead to better productivity and a better safety record.

Don't let equipment incidents ruin your record. For example, don't exceed the recommended load limits of vehicles used in handling materials.

Make sure all vehicle operators in your area follow the regulations and safe operating procedures.

For more information, refer to current applicable Occupational Health and Safety Legislation.

The Alberta Construction Safety Association's mission is to



provide quality advice and education for the construction industry that will reduce human suffering and financial costs associated with workplace incidents. This brochure is part of a series, **The Toolbox Brochures**, which are available on a variety of safety topics. If you have any questions or comments please contact:

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Materials Handling and Storage



Making Safety A Way Of Life



The Alberta Construction Safety Association

Safety All the Way

Every material handling operation is different. Each part of the construction industry must take care to ensure safety practices are in place at every stage of handling various materials.

Every worker and supervisor has a safety role to play in handling and storing materials. Good housekeeping, proper lifting and loading procedures, and proper packaging are all important considerations.

Pallets and Safety

Use of pallets for loading and handling materials is extensive throughout the construction industry. Be sure the pallets you are using are in good condition. Cross piling and other safe loading techniques are required. Tie and secure any unstable loads and repack them if necessary.

Make sure you find out what type and size of pallets will be used for loads you expect to receive. They must be suitable for the type of equipment you use to unload the materials.



Planning Each Move

Materials should be moved only when necessary. When you plan to move, ship, or receive materials, consider all parts of the operation:

- How will it be transported?
- Are the workers experienced enough?
- Do you have enough workers to do the job right?
- Is the vehicle operator skilled enough for the job at hand?
- Are the packages or load sizes appropriate?

Materials Handling Equipment

When you think about how to handle materials, or place them in storage properly, think about equipment that can assist you. Wherever possible use:

- Trucks
- Truck mounted cranes
- Forklifts
- Dollies
- Carts
- Wheelbarrows
- Hoists



Save your back and increase job efficiency by using the right tool for the right job. When manual assistance is required at any stage in the job, ensure that there are enough workers to share the work. By improving your handling procedures, your safety record will improve.

Stacking and Storage

Proper stacking, storage, and good housekeeping are essential parts of materials handling no matter what kind of work site you're at. When storing or stacking materials, check:

- Do stacks restrict access?
- Do they interfere with visibility?
- Are they stable and secure?
- Are they stacked so high they pose a danger of toppling over?
- Is there a danger of contact with power lines?
- Will single packages or items in a pile drop from up high if bumped at a lower level?
- Barrels and bags: has removal of any items created instability?
- Is there safe working space for workers, pallet jacks, forklifts, or trucks?
- Is there any fire risk? Keep flammables away from potential ignition sources.

In Transport

Many incidents and mishaps occur during transportation of materials. Check:

- Is the speed limit being observed?
- Is the load balanced and loaded properly?
- Is the vehicle being used for its designed purpose?
- Has the load been properly secured?

On arrival, check for any spillage or leakage. Check to see that hazardous materials are properly labeled, and that the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is readily available.