

**OVERVIEW OF FACT SHEET**

Materials handling is one of the leading causes of occupational injury at UNC Charlotte. Lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying can lead to pain and permanent body damage. Therefore, it is very important that you as an EMPLOYEE remain aware of your environmental conditions and how to properly handle materials.

This fact sheet provides general awareness of standard practices to prevent material related injuries. Please remember it is your responsibility as an employee to follow safe working practices and report any unsafe condition to your immediate supervisor. The campus has a goal of zero accidents and we need your support to ensure the safety of our campus community.

If you have any questions, please contact the [Environmental Health and Safety Office](mailto:EHSooffice@uncc.edu) at 704-687-1111 or [EHSooffice@uncc.edu](mailto:EHSooffice@uncc.edu). You may also request a service on <https://safety.uncc.edu/>. We are available to assist with recommending engineering improvements (i.e. redesign work station, lifting equipment) and/or administrative improvements (i.e. training, standard operating procedures). Our website also has a variety of assistance tools.



# Materials Handling

## Safe Lifting, Pushing and Pulling

**Tips for Preventing Materials Handling Injuries**

- Review the work environment for unsafe conditions and report observations to your supervisor before performing task.
- Avoid manually lifting or lowering loads to or from the floor. Ensure materials are stored and arranged to minimize the distance loads are lifted, lowered, pushed or pulled. Pallets are good options for keeping materials off the floor.
- Select the proper equipment for the job and ensure you understand how to properly use it. There are a variety of lift assisting equipment such as hand trucks, dollies, pallet jacks, hoists, and forklifts. Please ensure you have received documented training before attempting to use this equipment.
- Ensure you are physically capable of safely lifting, pushing and pulling materials. Test the load for stability and weight before moving.
- Select the appropriate PPE - Wear the appropriate closed toed slip resistant shoes. In some instances, protective toed shoes will be required when moving heavy objects (refrigerators, large boxes, etc.). It is recommended that appropriate cut resistant or chemical resistant gloves should also be worn.
- Obtain assistance before attempting to lift a heavy load.
- Take your TIME! You are more likely to be injured when you are tired.
- Use smooth motions while lifting; no twisting, turning or jerking.
- **Always use proper lifting techniques:**
  - Get a secure grip using both hands; use smooth, even motions; keep load close, and use your legs.
- **When carrying materials:**
  - Slide, push or roll; push instead of pulling; avoid slopes, stairs, or other obstacles; avoid slippery surfaces; keep a clear view; use elevators; use both hands where possible and alternate.



**GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS:**

- Has anyone had a back injury? How could this have been prevented?
- Are there common objects which you find yourself lifting frequently? Do you have specific procedures for lifting these objects?
- Do you have access to materials handling equipment? If not, do you know how to obtain them?