Manual handling toolbox talk

Health · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

On a building site we lift and carry all day: cement bags, blocks, kerbs, steel, shutters and full wheelbarrows. Back injuries, hernias, torn shoulders and crushed fingers often come from one bad lift, but just as often they build up quietly over months and years. The Ergonomics Regulations require the employer to assess these risks and control them, starting with getting rid of the lift where possible.

SAY THIS

Think before you lift

Before you pick something up, stop and size it up. How heavy is it? Is it awkward, sharp or wet? Where is it going, and is the path clear of rubble, cables and steps? Then ask the most important question: does this need to be lifted by hand at all? A wheelbarrow, trolley, pallet jack or the TLB may do it better.

Lift with your legs

Stand close to the load with your feet apart, one slightly forward. Bend your knees and keep your back as straight as you can. Get a firm grip with your whole hand, not just your fingertips. Lift smoothly, using your legs, and keep the load close to your belly. Do not twist your back: turn by moving your feet. Put it down the same way, bending your knees.

Two people, one voice

If a load is too heavy or too long for one person, get help. In a team lift, one person gives the count, and everyone lifts, walks and puts down together. Agree beforehand where it is going and who leads.

Barrows and trolleys

Do not overfill a wheelbarrow. Keep its tyre pumped and lay planks over soft ground, trenches and steps. Push rather than pull where you can, and keep a straight back on the handles.

Pace the work

Heavy, repeated work wears the body out. Swap tasks during the day so the same person is not off-loading every bag. Take short breaks. Ask for deliveries to be dropped close to where they will be used, and stack at waist height where possible so you do not keep bending to the ground.

Speak up early

If something hurts, tell the foreman early. Back and shoulder pain that is reported early can often be dealt with before it becomes an injury that stops you working. If you are hurt during a lift, report it before the end of the shift and get first aid and medical help.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- ☐ Which loads today could be moved by machine, trolley or barrow instead of by hand?
- ☐ Walkways and carrying routes clear of rubble, cables and holes
- ☐ Wheelbarrows with pumped tyres, and planks laid over soft ground and trenches
- ☐ Materials delivered and stacked close to where they are needed
- ☐ Enough people for team lifts on long or heavy items
- ☐ Gloves available for rough, sharp or wet loads

ASK THE CREW

- ? What do we carry by hand on this job that we could move another way?
- ? Who has had back or shoulder pain from work, and what made it worse?
- ? How should we split up the heavy jobs today?
- ? What makes a load awkward even when it is not very heavy?

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Gloves with good grip for rough, sharp or wet loads · Safety boots to protect feet from dropped loads

THE LAW

Ergonomics Regulations (Government Notice R. 1589 of 6 December 2019), regulation 6: Ergonomic risk assessment; Ergonomics Regulations (Government Notice R. 1589 of 6 December 2019), regulation 7: Risk control; Ergonomics Regulations (Government Notice R. 1589 of 6 December 2019), regulation 3: Information, instruction and training; Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 9(2): Risk assessment for construction work. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/manual-handling/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Lifting and carrying by hand

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

NO.	NAME AND SURNAME	COMPANY OR TRADE	SIGNATURE
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