

SWP Purpose

Lifting heavy items is part of trail crew daily duties. Doing so properly is important to prevent injuries. This safe work practice (SWP) is intended to help workers in assessing the hazards of manual lifting – including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, and/or carrying a load. This will involve an evaluation of the load itself, the environment in which the task is being conducted, and the physical capabilities of the worker(s).

Scope

This SWP applies to any worker who conducts the following:

- Lifting, carrying, and/or moving material or equipment
- Transporting, placing, or storing material or equipment
- Removing material or equipment from storage area

Responsibilities

Responsibilities apply to the Trip Manager/Volunteer Lead, all workers, and the Health and Safety Committee.

It is the responsibility of the **Trip Manager**/Volunteer Lead to

- Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of Musculoskeletal Injuries.
- Communicate to workers the importance of early reporting of symptoms and injury
- Consider the option to purchase tools and equipment that may reduce risk to the worker(s)
- Reinforce to workers that any recommended controls must be applied consistently
- Ensure that workers are trained in the requirements of this practice
- Require that this SWP be implemented for all applicable job tasks

It is the responsibility of the Workers to

- Be aware of potential hazards that may be encountered while conducting work that requires manual lifting
- Know the proper use and limitations of equipment.
- Be aware of and comply with requirements communicated in this SWP
- Be familiar with manufacturer's instructions.
- Inspect equipment and work areas regularly for hazards
- Ensure recommended controls are implemented and used appropriately.
- Immediately report any discomfort associated with manual lifting and handling to the Crew Lead.

It is the responsibility of the Health Safety Committee to

- Maintain this Safe Work Practice
- Perform periodic audits to assess that these requirements/SWP are being acted upon.
- Reinforce that recommended controls are to be implemented and used appropriately.

Hazards

Hazards relative to manual lifting and handling may be due to the load's size, weight, shape, joining of more than one item, slippery **or uneven**

surfaces, missing handles/handholds, lack of balance.

The task itself may introduce hazards due to the need for repetitive actions, actions occurring over a long time period, distances involved in moving the load, ergonomic issues.

The environment may introduce hazards due to temperature, humidity, poor lighting, time limits, general physical conditions.

The worker may introduce hazards due to general health, strength, reach, flexibility, pre-existing physical conditions, psychological factors such as stress, lack of familiarity with process, actions, or materials being handled.

Controls

Controls may include elimination/substitution, engineering, warnings, administrative, and/or PPE.

Manual handling tasks should be either originally designed or adapted to be within the worker's capacity.

- Assess the item you will be lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, or handling – observe the weight, size, and shape of the item(s)
- Plan ahead – consider how many times it needs to be moved and where it is to be moved.
- Split the load into sections, to reduce the weight so that it can be easily handled by a single worker (The load for a single person should never exceed 50lb (23kg); loads greater than this should be divided between people or carried by more than one person)
- If there are two workers moving one item, be sure to continually communicate with one another during the lifting/moving process.
- Use mechanical means
- Use lifting devices such as hoists, ramps, dollies, etc.
- Push loads rather than pull them
- Do not overload the material being pushed (e.g. wheelbarrows)
- Make sure that the load doesn't block vision
- Make sure that the work temperature is appropriate
- When working in hot temperatures, take frequent breaks and stay hydrated
- When working in cold temperatures, wear good, insulated clothing and check that the loads can be handled when wearing heavy gloves/heavy clothing

- Clear obstacles
- Check grade
- Stretch before you lift/handle materials
- Face the object with your feet shoulder width apart
- Keep the load close to the body.
- Bend at the knees and position the body into a squat.
- Secure your hands around the item to be moved.
- Once you have a good grip on the load, keep your eyes up to monitor your surroundings.
- Gently begin raising upwards with your knees, never your back.
- Maintain the curve in your lower back (lumbar curve).
- Continue until completely erect. Never twist. Then turn to the direction required
- Do not lift an object that will obscure your vision or footing.
- Lift the object smoothly and slowly using your leg muscles; do not jerk as you lift.
- Make sure that your path is clear of obstructions and that there are no slip hazards.
- Repeat the same practice in placing the item down, bending at the knees and never twisting.
- If you have a lot of lifting to do, get help, or try not to do it all at once.
- Do not rush or cut corners.
- Try to avoid carrying a load more than 3.0 m without getting help
- Clearly communicate to partner(s) when the load is to be dropped. Example: "All clear?
(Confirmed). Drop on count of 3. Ready? 1,2,3 drop."

Training

Workers who are involved in manual lifting/handling should be made aware of signs of musculoskeletal injuries, the methods for safe lifting and carrying. "On the job" training and demos are an excellent way of training.

Resources, References, Definitions

Revision History

<u>Revision</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description of Change</u>	<u>Personnel Involved</u>
REV 0	Feb 2020	New SWP	D Yanchula
Rev 1	Feb 2023	Reviewed – No change	D Yanchula

