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SAFELY CARRYING HEAVY LOADS

A poorly designed materials-handling task is one where the strength requirements to complete the task exceed the strength capabilities of most workers. Simply put, most workers would not be able to perform the task without overexertion.

Poorly designed tasks generally require workers to lift, lower, push, pull, or carry heavy loads. These tasks may also include excessive bending, reaching, or twisting of the body.

The following guidelines provide suggestions on how to properly carry various objects.

TO ELIMINATE THE NEED TO CARRY HEAVY OBJECTS:

- Rearrange the workplace to eliminate unnecessary movement of material.
- Use mechanical handling aids, such as—
 - Conveyors;
 - Lift trucks;
 - Hand trucks;
 - Tables or slides between workstations;
 - Four-wheel carts or dollies;
 - Air or gravity press ejection systems; and
 - Overhead cranes.



Source: U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christina Westover. Cleared for public release.

TO MINIMIZE RISK DUE TO WEIGHT CARRIED:

- Reduce the weight of the object or container.
- Reduce the load in the container.
- Specify quantity per container to suppliers.
- Eliminate one-handed carries.
- Improve the handhold or grip on the container.

TO MINIMIZE RISK DUE TO THE BULK OF MATERIALS CARRIED:

- Reduce the size or shape of the object or container.
- Provide handles or handgrips that allow materials to be held close to the body.
- Assign the job to two or more persons.

TO MINIMIZE RISK DUE TO THE CARRY DISTANCE:

- Relocate receiving, storage, production, or shipping areas.
- Use powered and nonpowered conveyors.

TO CONVERT THE CARRY TO A PUSH PULL TASK:

- Use nonpowered conveyors.
- Use hand trucks and pushcarts.