



September 2024

OVERVIEW OF FACT SHEET

This fact sheet offers general guidelines for preventing material-related injuries. 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 handle materials properly.

As an employee, you are responsible for following safe work practices and promptly reporting any hazards to your supervisor. The campus aims to have zero accidents, and we need your support to ensure the safety of our campus community.

EHS can recommend engineering solutions (e.g., workstation redesign, lifting equipment) or administrative improvements (e.g., training, procedures). Visit our website for additional resources.



For questions, contact the [Environmental Health and Safety Office](#) at 704-687-1111 or ehsoffice@charlotte.edu.

Materials Handling

Safe Lifting, Pushing and Pulling

Tips for Preventing Materials Handling Injuries

- **Use the Right Equipment**
Choose appropriate equipment like hand trucks, dollies, pallet jacks, hoists, or forklifts. Ensure you're trained and understand how to use them properly.
- **Get Assistance for Heavy Loads**
Don't hesitate to ask for help when lifting heavy or awkwardly shaped items.
- **Use Proper Lifting Techniques**
Use your legs to lift, not your back. Secure your grip, move smoothly, and keep the load close to your body. Avoid twisting or jerking.
- **Check Your Physical Capacity**
Ensure you can lift, push, or pull the load. Test the weight and stability before moving it.
- **Wear Proper PPE**
Use the right personal protective equipment (PPE), such as slip-resistant, closed-toe shoes. For heavy objects, wear protective-toed shoes and cut or chemical-resistant gloves when necessary.
- **Inspect the Area**
Look over your environment for hazards before starting. Report unsafe conditions to your supervisor.
- **Minimize Lifting from the Floor**
Avoid lifting or lowering heavy loads directly from the floor. Use pallets or shelves to store materials at accessible heights.
- **Pace Yourself**
Don't rush. You're more prone to injury when tired or hurrying. Take your time to avoid overexertion.
- **When Moving Materials**
Slide, push, or roll objects whenever possible. Push instead of pulling, avoid slopes and stairs, use elevators, and keep a clear view of your path.



GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Has anyone been injured handling materials? How could it have been prevented?
- Do you often lift certain objects? Do you follow specific lifting procedures?
- Do you have access to materials handling equipment? If not, do you know how to obtain them?