

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

MATERIALS HANDLING - GENERAL

**This information does not take precedence over OH&S. All employees should be familiar with the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the OH&S Regulations.*

General: Every material handling operation is different, and safety practices are in place at every stage of handling various materials. Manual material handling accident and falls are frequent. Every worker and supervisor has a safety role to play in handling and storing materials. Good housekeeping, proper lifting and loading procedures, and proper packaging are all important.

1. Materials should be moved only when necessary. When you plan to move, ship or receive materials consider all parts of the operation:
 - How will it be transported?
 - Are the workers experienced enough?
 - Do you have enough workers to do the job right?
 - Is the vehicle operator skilled enough for the job at hand?
 - Are the packages or load sizes appropriate?
2. When using pallets, be sure the pallets you are using are in good condition. Cross piling and other safe loading techniques are required. Tie and secure any unstable loads and repack them if necessary. Make sure you find out what type and size of pallets will be used on loads you expect to receive. They must be suitable for the type of equipment you use to unload the materials.
3. Whenever possible, use materials handling equipment to assist with the move. Save your back and increase job efficiency by using the right tool for the right job. When manual assistance is required at any stage in the job, ensure that there are enough workers to share the work.
4. Proper stacking and storage is an essential part of materials handling and good housekeeping no matter what kind of worksite you're at. When sorting or stacking materials, check to be sure stacked materials:
 - Do not restrict access or interfere with visibility.
 - Are stable and secure and will not topple over.
 - Do not pose a danger of contact with power lines.
 - Will not drop from up high if bumped at a lower level.
 - Will not become unstable if an item is removed (i.e. barrels and bags).
 - Do not pose a fire hazard – store flammables away from potential ignition sources.
5. When transporting materials:
 - Use a vehicle which is designed for materials transport.
 - Don't exceed the manufacturer's recommended load limit for the transport vehicle.
 - Load and balance the material properly
 - Observe the speed limit.
 - On arrival check for any spillage or leakage. Check to see the hazardous materials are properly labeled. A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) should be readily available.