

Pushing and Pulling Safe Work Procedure

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Overview:

It takes less force to push or pull an object than it does to manually lift an object. If possible, it is always preferable to push an object rather than pull it. Pushing allows the engagement of the stronger leg muscles more efficiently and does not put unnecessary strain on the shoulders.

Risk Factors:

- When engaging in a task that requires pushing or pulling an object, there is a natural tendency to push or pull the object using the arms to power the move. This can lead to a posture where the arms are overextended and the spinal column becomes rounded at the lower back, putting stress on the spine and hips. The proper pushing and pulling techniques use strong leg muscles to power the movement while keeping the elbows close to the sides and the neutral spine posture.
- Do not push one object while pulling another object. This approach presents many injury risks. Make multiple trips to transport each object individually using safe body mechanics.

Number of Workers:

- Workers are to complete a risk assessment to determine the appropriate number of workers to complete the task safely.

Equipment Needed: Wheeled equipment, gloves (as required).

Procedure:

1. Ensure good visibility to see straight ahead when pushing or pulling the object. If the object being moved will not allow for appropriate visibility for the mover, ask for another worker to assist with guiding the object.
2. Stand with a neutral spine position with the ears, shoulders and hips aligned.
3. Position the feet in a staggered stance close to the object.
4. Select the strongest grip possible based on the design of the object being pushed or pulled. Often handles are designed for a palms down/pronated grip or a neutral/thumbs up grip. Use a stronger neutral grip, if possible. Push or pull using two hands.



5. Position the elbows close to the trunk to stabilize the shoulders. The elbows should ideally be at a 90-degree bend. If the item being moved has height adjustability, take the time to adjust it to a height that allows it to be pushed using safe body mechanics.
6. Bend at the hips and knees. Use strong leg muscles to power the movement. Think of lunging forward with the legs.
7. Keep the core strong during pushing or pulling to keep the spinal column in the neutral spine position and to minimize twisting.
8. When turning while pushing or pulling, complete small backward and forward movements to reposition the feet to minimize twisting. Remember, the feet should always be pointed in the same direction you are facing.

