



USING HAND TRUCKS SAFELY



This talk discusses safe work practices for using manual hand trucks to transport loads.

Materials to have on hand:

- Hand trucks in use at the facility
- Boxes and other sample items to demonstrate proper loading of a hand truck

Items for attendees to consider during the talk:

- How should objects be stacked on a hand truck?
- What parts of a hand truck should you inspect before you use it?

TALK

Hand trucks are simple pieces of equipment that can be extremely helpful when moving boxes and other heavy objects. Proper use of a hand truck can help prevent strains, sprains, and other lifting-related injuries. However, hand trucks are not without hazards of their own; so use them carefully and follow safe work practices.

Inspecting

Before you use a hand truck, inspect it. If it has air-filled tires, check that the air pressure is correct; if it has hard rubber tires, make sure they are in good condition. Examine the frame for broken or bent areas, and check for any loose or damaged bolts or

other parts. Wheels should turn easily; if the hand truck is equipped with brakes, make sure they work.

Loading

When you load the hand truck, always place heavier objects or boxes on the bottom of the stack, with lighter objects on top. Check the rated weight capacity of the hand truck, and don't go over it. Don't load the hand truck with more weight than you can safely manage, even if the equipment can handle it. Never stack items so high that you cannot see over the top. If the load is not stable, secure it to the hand truck with a strap.

Safe use

Follow these safe practices for using a hand truck:

- Get a firm grip on the handle. Wear work gloves with slip-resistant coatings. Do not operate hand trucks when your hands or the handles are wet or greasy.
- Maintain good back posture by keeping your back straight and bending your knees. Push the hand truck rather than pulling it whenever possible, and do not walk backward.
- Allow the hand truck to carry the weight so that you only need to push and steer. Two-wheeled hand trucks should be tilted back just enough so that the weight is balanced on the wheels. Tilting

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Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

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back too far will require you to support too much of the load.

- Travel at a safe speed to avoid obstacles such as debris, wet floors, or uneven floors. Maintain the speed required to keep the hand truck under control. Keep an eye out for other vehicles, equipment or structures, edges of docks, trip hazards, pedestrians, etc.
- When operating on a ramp or inclined surface, keep the load downhill if possible. This will prevent the load from rolling over or falling on top of you if you lose control. However, avoid using hand trucks on very steep inclines.
- Keep your feet clear of the wheels when using hand trucks.
- Do not ride on a hand truck, and never carry a passenger.
- Protect your hands from being crushed against solid objects. Watch for pinch points when you go through doorways or other tight areas.
- Park hand trucks in appropriate places. Keep them out of main walkways, and do not block emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers or exits.

