

# Manual Materials Handling (MMH)

## MMH - General Practice

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## What types of protective clothing should be worn?

### DO WEAR

- Lightweight, flexible, tear and puncture-resistant clothing.
- Safety boots with toe caps and slip-resistant soles.
- Protective gloves, appropriate for the materials being handled.

### DO NOT WEAR

- Clothing that may interfere or 'snag' on the object you are lifting, such as aprons, coats or clothing with exposed buttons, zippers or loose flaps.
- Heavy duty mitts that limit your grasp.

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## What should you do before lifting?

- Always check before lifting to see if mechanical aids such as hoists, lift trucks dollies or wheelbarrows are available.
- Get help with heavy or awkward loads.
- Assess and identify the weight of the load.
- Be sure that you can lift the load without over-exertion.
- Be sure that the load is "free" to move.
- Check that the contents of the load are stable and balanced. Repack items so the contents will not shift, where possible.
- Check that the planned location of the load is free of obstacles and debris.

- Be sure that the path to the planned location of the load is clear. Grease, oil, water, litter and debris can cause slips and falls.
  - Particular handling and lifting techniques are needed for different kinds of loads or materials being handled (for example, [compact loads](#), [small bags](#), [large sacks](#), [drums and barrels](#), [cylinders](#), [sheet materials](#) like metal or glass).
  - Do not lift if you are not sure that you can handle the load safely.
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## What are some general tips for lifting?

- Prepare for the lift by warming up the muscles.
  - Stand close to the load and face the way you intend to move.
  - Use a wide stance to gain balance.
  - Be sure you have a good grip on the load.
  - Keep arms straight.
  - Tighten abdominal muscles.
  - Tuck chin into the chest.
  - Initiate the lift with body weight.
  - Lift the load as close to and as centred to the body as possible.
  - Lift smoothly without jerking.
  - Avoid twisting and side bending while lifting.
  - Avoid carrying loads with only one hand.
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