



# Safety Tips for Moving to the HCHB Swing



**Office of Occupational  
Safety and Health**





# Getting Ready for the Move...

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- ❑ Planning your move will help you prevent injuries.
- ❑ You and your Supervisor can start by identifying the main hazards associated with your office move. If you need additional guidance, ask your bureau Safety Coordinator to assist. Consider the following areas:
  - Housekeeping
  - Hallways and fire exits
  - Electrical hazards
  - Hazardous substances / chemicals
  - Lifting
  - Storage
  - Slips / trips / falls
  - Cuts
  - Computers



# Housekeeping

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- ❑ Housekeeping is crucial during a move.
- ❑ Take a methodical approach to packing.
- ❑ Identify items you will move and make sure you clear a path free of tripping hazards prior to moving them.
- ❑ Discard trash in proper receptacles.
- ❑ Recycle when possible.





# Exits

- ❑ Always keep access to fire exits clear. Blocked exits can make it difficult for you to exit in an emergency.
- ❑ If employees become trapped during an emergency due to blocked exits, serious injuries or fatalities could result.



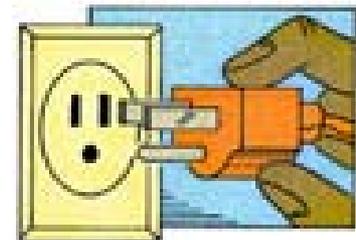


# Electrical Hazards

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- ❑ Defective or misuse of electrical equipment can cause serious shock and burn injuries.
- ❑ Inspect the equipment before packing.
  - Check the plugs and cords for fraying or damage and if damaged, throw out.
  - Never remove grounding plugs.
- ❑ To remove a plug from an outlet, grip the plug firmly. Never pull a plug out by the cord.





# Hazardous Substances

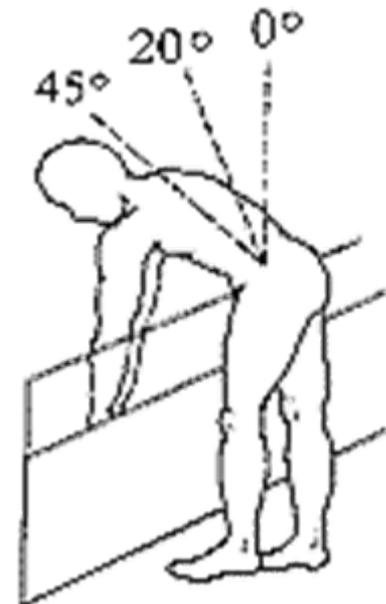
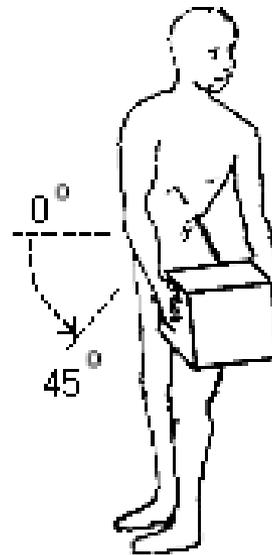
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- ❑ Identify hazardous chemicals and liquids. Ask your Moving Coordinator if you are allowed to move them.
  - If yes, check the containers for a tight seal. Keep in original containers, clearly labeled.
  - If not, ask how to properly dispose of them.
- ❑ Some substances found in offices may be hazardous, but generally under normal conditions, the risk of injury is low. Examples are:
  - Liquid paper
  - Glue and spray adhesives
  - Inks and toners
  - Cleaning products and solvents
- ❑ **Never** put ammonia and bleach bottles in the same box because the combination has been known to cause explosions!



# Lifting – No Twisting or Bending

- ❑ Twisting while lifting
  - Forces the back to support the weight of the upper body in addition to the weight you are lifting.
- ❑ Bending while lifting
  - Places strain on the back even when lifting something as light as a pencil.
- ❑ Why is this bad?
  - Twisting and bending move the load away from the body and significantly increase the load on your back and fatigues the muscles.





# Lifting - Activities to Avoid

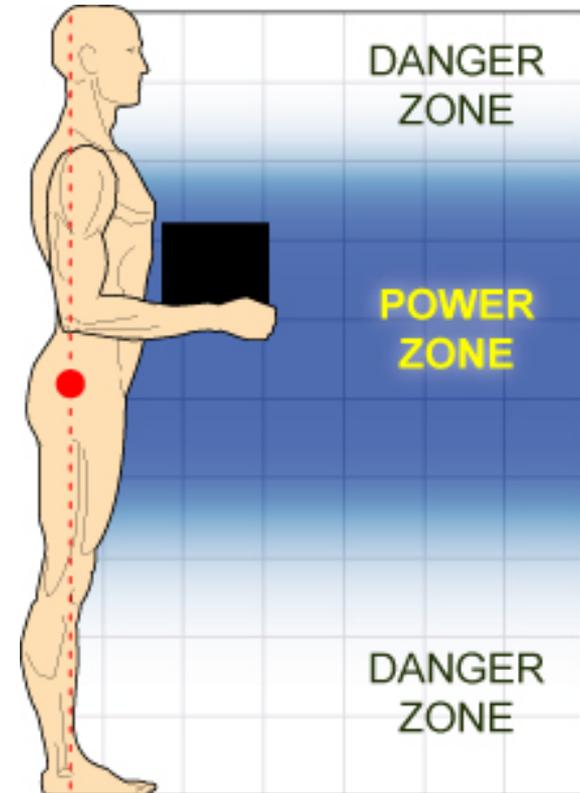
- ❑ Lifting and bending from a seated position places tremendous strain on your back. And, your chair could slip out from under you.
  - Solution - Stand up and move your chair out of the way. Squat and stand to retrieve something from the floor.
- ❑ Reaching using a chair or stack of boxes
  - Solution – Use a ladder or foot-stool.
- ❑ Carrying large or especially heavy items, particularly if they block your view.
  - Solution – Get help for large items.
- ❑ Lifting objects above your head.
  - Solution - Ask yourself: How high do I have to lift it? Determine if assistance is needed.
- ❑ Lifting large boxes
  - Solution - Select boxes with slots or handles when possible or get assistance.





# Lifting - Power Zone

- ❑ The power zone for lifting
  - Items should be close to the body, between mid-thigh and mid-chest height.
  - Arms and back can lift the most with the least amount of effort.
- ❑ Minimize bending and reaching
  - Place heavy objects in the “Power Zone”
  - Place objects on shelves or tables, rather than the floor.





# Lifting - Safe Steps

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1. Maintain a balanced stance, place feet shoulder-width apart.
2. When lifting from the floor, squat close to the load.
3. Keep your back in a neutral or straight position. Tuck in your chin and align head and neck to continue the straight back line.
4. Grip object with your whole hand, rather just with your fingers. Draw object close to you, hold elbows close to your body to keep load and body weight centered.
5. Lift by straightening your legs. Let your leg muscles, not your back muscles, do the work. Tighten your stomach muscles to help support your back. Maintain a neutral back position as you lift.
6. Never carry a load that blocks your vision.
7. To set something down, use the same body mechanics designed for lifting.
8. Never twist when lifting. When you must turn with a load, turn your whole body, feet first.



# Lifting From the Floor

Avoid lifting from the floor whenever possible. If you must lift from the floor, do not bend at the waist. The techniques shown below help the worker to keep the spine in a safer position while lifting from the floor.



*Caution:* This technique may be effective only if loads are small, light weight, and can easily fit between the knees.



# Lifting – Team Lift

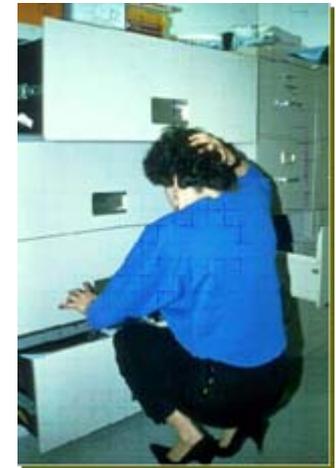
- ❑ Team lifting must be coordinated:
  - Ideally, workers should be of approximately the same size.
  - One individual needs to control the action to ensure proper coordination.
  - If one worker lifts too soon, shifts the load, or lowers it improperly, either they or the person working with them could be injured.





# Storage Hazards

- ❑ Improperly stored office materials can lead to hazards such as objects falling on you.
  - Solution – Don't store heavy items above your shoulders.
- ❑ Unsecured files and drawers can cause injuries.
  - Solution - Close file cabinet drawers, file doors, and pull-out work tables when not in use.
- ❑ Unsecured hutches could fall and injure you.
  - Solution – Make sure hutches are secured to the credenza.





# Slips / Trips / Falls

## □ Facts

- Annually, 15% of work-related injuries are due to slips, trips, or falls.
- Falls account for 12 to 15% of all workers' compensation costs.
- About 5,100 workers died from work-related falls in 1999.

- Slips are primarily caused by a slippery surface, being in a hurry, and compounded by wearing the wrong footwear.

- Solution – Before you lift or move an item, make sure the floor is clean and dry, make sure you have the proper footwear, and take your time.





# Cuts

- ❑ Use caution when folding or handling paper and boxes, as they can cut.
  - Solution - When sealing boxes be careful when using any sharp object and avoid edges of the boxes. When sealing envelopes, use a liquid dispenser, not your tongue.
- ❑ Use paper clips or staples to fasten papers together. Be sure staples are fully closed.
  - Solution - Use a staple remover to remove staples, not your nails.
- ❑ Knives and scissors can cause injury.
  - Solution - Use care when using knives, scissors, staplers, letter openers, and box openers.





# Computers, Etc.

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- ❑ Your computer, monitor, keyboard and printers will be packed for you.
- ❑ CDs/DVDs should be packed by you because they are sensitive to heat, cold, magnetic fields and warping could occur if they are packed into moving boxes.
- ❑ Place CDs/DVDs in their respective covers and store them.



# Conclusion

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- ❑ Plan a head.
- ❑ Be aware of the hazards.
- ❑ Do not block hallways, exits, etc.
- ❑ Be cautious with electricity, hazardous chemicals.
- ❑ Plan your manual lifting.
- ❑ Take measures to prevent slips/trips/falls, cuts, and strains.
- ❑ Pack and move only what you will need; discard or recycle the rest.
- ❑ Take your time and focus on the move.



# Questions

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- For more information contact your Bureau Safety Coordinator. To find your Bureau Safety Coordinator, go to the following website:  
[http://hr.commerce.gov/Employees/WorkLifeIssues/DEV01\\_006462](http://hr.commerce.gov/Employees/WorkLifeIssues/DEV01_006462)