

SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION FOR

SAFE WORKPLACES

IN HEALTH

Principles of Safe Body Mechanics/Good Posture and Basic Object Moving Education Session

Participant Handout

excerpts from SASWH's Transferring Lifting Repositioning (TLR[®]) program[®]



Workplace health and safety:
a priority for all.

Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

Under the occupational health and safety legislation every worker has three rights.

1. *Right to Know* the hazards at their workplace, to be trained to recognize them, and to be trained to protect themselves.
2. *Right to Participate* in their own safety as well as the safety program in their workplace.
3. *Right to Refuse* an act or series of acts where the worker has reasonable grounds to believe that it is unusually dangerous. This is a refusal of an individual worker, not a group of workers.

Accountability

The general definition of "accountability" includes:

- being bound to give an explanation of your conduct
- being responsible; answerable.

In day to day work, accountability means:

- following the policy
- using the skills you have received in training
- being responsible for the decisions/actions you make at work and even at home
- performing your job duties accurately and appropriately and using your knowledge, skills and abilities received during training - including making appropriate choice
- asking for help/assistance or additional training
- use equipment safely
- report anything that is unsafe.

Risk Assessment

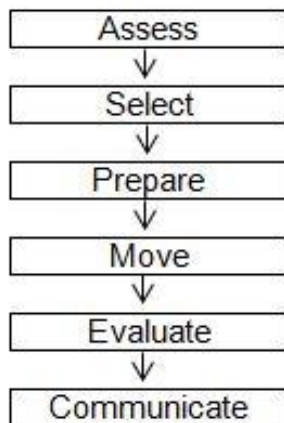
When hazards are identified you then assess risk(s). Risks are then eliminated or managed.

The areas to assess include: self - environment - equipment - task/object.

Think about:

- what can I do to eliminate/manage the risks? e.g., do I need to be more aware of using safe body mechanics, incorporating equipment?
- what do I need help with to eliminate/manage the risks? e.g., do I need assistance to increase my mobility, education?
- who do I need help from to eliminate/manage the risks? e.g., co-workers, supervisor?

Steps to a Moving Task



Assess: complete a risk assessment of self, environment, equipment, object, not just once, but also *In the Moment* the task is being performed

Select: the safest moving technique will be determined through the risk assessment process

Prepare: footwear, personal protective equipment (PPE), equipment, assistance, roles clarified, command established, route, second location, pathway, clear visibility

Move: *In the Moment* Assessment

Evaluate: ask yourself questions

Communicate: verbal and written

Good Posture

Standing Posture:

- tighten core
- flex the knees often
- work at an appropriate height for the task
- wear comfortable shoes that have support and are appropriate for the task
- stand on a cushioned or anti-fatigue mat when standing for extended periods of time
- to assist in relieving the static posture of standing, place one foot up on an elevated ledge (e.g., 10-15cm or 4-6" high)

Sitting Posture:

- sit in alignment with ears over shoulders and shoulders over hips. Position reading material to avoid looking up or down for prolonged periods of time
- use a chair appropriate for the task that provides good lumbar support
- sit with feet flat on the floor, thighs at approximately a 90 degree angle, and knees slightly lower than the hips
- place both feet on appropriate foot rests when necessary
- sit close to the work
- stretch frequently

Checkpoints to Safe Body Mechanics

Safe stance

- feet shoulder width apart (parallel or stride stance)

For the top

- ears over shoulders
- shoulders over hips

For the bottom

- bend at the knees (e.g., soft knees)
- bend at the hips
- “sit” into it (buttocks move down and back)
- tighten core (i.e. abdominal muscles)

Safe effective grip

- wrists in neutral position (wrists aligned with forearm)
- elbows close to your sides
- thumbs up or out

Comfort zone

- vertical zone: area between the shoulders and thighs (where the fingertips touch the thighs when standing in an upright posture); and,
- horizontal zone: area in front of you when your elbows are at or near a 90 degree angle and are close to your sides
- keep the load close

Weight transfer

- side to side
- front to back



Risk Assessment

A **risk** is any factor that has the potential to jeopardize the safety of those involved in the moving task. In TLR, **Risk Assessment** is the process by which the worker identifies and then eliminates or manages risks in order to select the safest moving technique.

Self Risk Assessment

Risk	How does this impact a safe move?	Action to eliminate or manage the risk
Physical Status previous injury/illness/surgery height/weight relative to client/other workers body mechanics physical fatigue physical fitness nutrition stimulant/depressant usage clothing		
Emotional Status stress emotional fatigue		
Training and Experience assessment and decision-making years of service/experience specific certification moving task attitude/approach legislation		
Communication Skills other workers vision/hearing		
Workload time constraints availability of staff		

Environment Risk Assessment

Risk	How does this impact a safe move?	Action to eliminate or manage the risk
Potential for violence/aggression Student/family/visitors Other workers		
Room/Area Size/layout Doorway Floor Clutter Furniture Climate		
Colours/Lighting Colours Lighting Shiny surfaces Shadows Contrasts		
Noise/Distractions Technology/events Conversation Voice tone Distractions		
Working Surfaces Level/stability Height/width Friction		

Equipment Risk Assessment

Risk	How does this impact a safe move?	Action to eliminate or manage the risk
Quantity Accessible		
Capacity Ability		
Quality Function Maintenance		
Design Ergonomically correct Adjustable		
Manufacturer's Intended Use Limitations		

Object and Task Risk Assessment

Risk	How does this impact a safe move?	Action to eliminate or manage the risk
The object: size/shape Weight Texture Contents Handles Balance Temperature		
The task: Location Distance to be moved Force to initiate, maintain or stop movement Frequency/repetition		

TLR Safe Work Practice - TLR *In the Moment* Risk Assessment

For each object moving task:

- 1. Verify** before performing a moving technique. Find out:
 - what you need to know about the object through labeling, co-workers
 - what may be new or has changed since the last move, last shift
 - is the moving technique a lift or reposition and what equipment is needed
- 2. Assess** for risks:
 - assess yourself before, during and even after the moving task: ask yourself questions such as “How am I feeling?”, “What is my attitude like today?”
 - assess the environment: clutter, noise, lighting, aggression/violence
 - assess the equipment: ensure appropriate assistance and equipment is available in quantity, capacity and quality
 - assess the object: hot, cold, heavy, awkward
- 3. Select** the moving technique:
 - ensure it is the safest technique if it is already identified
 - the technique may need to change if the assessment has identified a change
- 4. Prepare** for the move:
 - appropriate footwear
 - the plan is in place (equipment, assistance, route)
 - clear visibility
- 5. Move** the object:
 - duties are assigned
 - use safe body mechanics (stance, grip, weight transfer)
 - use the appropriate steps for the moving task
- 6. Evaluate**
 - did you feel that the move compromised your own safe body mechanics?
 - at any time did you feel the load was too heavy, awkward or unstable?
- 7. Communicate**
 - what went well
 - what the recommended moving technique should be
 - how risks were eliminated or managed
 - what needs to be documented