



Not all loads can or should be lifted by one person. Attempting to lift heavy or awkward items alone is a common cause of back injuries, strains, and dropped loads. Team lifting is a simple and effective way to reduce risk when a load is too heavy, bulky, or difficult to handle alone.

This toolbox talk focuses on when and how to perform team lifting safely.

When to Use Team Lifting

Team lifting should be used when:

- The load is too heavy for one person.
- The item is large or awkward in shape.
- The load blocks your line of sight.
- The weight is unevenly distributed.
- The lift requires awkward positioning.
- The path includes stairs, tight spaces, or obstacles.

If you are unsure, assume help is needed.

Why Team Lifting Matters

Improper lifting can lead to:

- Back and muscle injuries.
- Loss of balance and falls.
- Dropped loads causing injury or damage.
- Strain from uneven weight distribution.

Sharing the load reduces strain and improves control.

Planning the Lift

Before lifting as a team:

- Assess the weight and shape of the load.
- Choose the right number of people.
- Plan the route and clear obstacles.
- Decide who will lead the lift.
- Agree on commands (e.g. "lift", "walk", "lower").
- Ensure everyone has a good grip and stable footing.

Good communication is essential.

Safe Team Lifting Technique

During the lift:

- Lift together on a clear command.
- Keep the load close to your body.
- Maintain proper posture (bend knees, keep back straight).
- Move slowly and in coordination.
- Avoid twisting — turn your whole body.
- Communicate throughout the movement.

If the load becomes unstable, stop and reset.

When to Stop

Stop the lift if:

- Someone loses grip or balance.
- The load shifts unexpectedly.
- The path becomes unsafe.
- The load is too heavy to control.

Reassess and adjust before continuing.

Summary

Team lifting is a safe way to handle heavy or awkward loads. Proper planning, communication, and coordination are key to preventing injuries. Never attempt to lift beyond your capability — ask for help and work as a team to keep the load under control.

Discussion Points

1. What tasks on this site require team lifting?
2. How should a team communicate during a lift?
3. When should mechanical aids be used instead of manual lifting?

