



for Maintenance and Custodians

MOVING FURNITURE SAFELY

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Custodians are frequently asked to move furniture, such as bookcases, desks, and file cabinets. The lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling involved in moving furniture creates a potential for injury. The Workers' Compensation Trust has received several incident reports from custodians performing this type of work. There are steps you can take before and during these moves to help reduce injuries.

Prepare for the move

- Remove loose items- make the object as light as possible
- Remove or tie down any drawers or other moving parts
- Clear your pathway
- Make sure there is a clear area to place the object
- Size up the load – if it's too heavy or large get assistance

Lift properly

- Use proper lifting techniques:
 - Stand close to the object
 - Squat down, bend your knees not your waist, keep your back straight
 - Get both hands securely on the object before you start lifting
 - Lift slowly with your leg muscles
 - Keep the object as close to you as possible
 - Never twist your body when lifting or carrying – change direction by moving your feet

Get assistance – either manual or mechanical

Manual - if you choose to have another person/s help to move the object there are things to remember when team lifting:

- Employees should be approximately the same size
- One person should be assigned to lead the lift to assure the necessary coordination
- If one person lifts or lowers too soon, the other person may be overloaded and strained

There are harness systems available to help carry the load when team lifting. They have them in back or forearm support.

Mechanical – There are many tools available to help in moving items:

- Hand trucks/dollies
- Rolling carts to move stacks of chairs and table
- Desk lifts for moving desks
- Friction reducing pads/devices

Remember: Don't attempt to move anything that is too heavy or large for you. Ask for help.