



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

# MSU DAWG TRACKS

A large portion of injuries here at work are from strains. Trying to pick up or move a heavy object without any help is how it usually all begins. Awareness of the hazards and a little pre-planning can go a long way when handling materials.

We all need help sometimes. An object's weight and bulkiness are contributing factors as to how much and what kind of help we need. **Before starting a material handling job task, size it up and plan the path of its movement.** Seek help, if it is too bulky to properly grasp or you cannot see around or over it.

## Help in material handling can come from manpower or mechanical power.

Manpower is individualized; your body's strengths and weaknesses determines your unique lifting capacity. Your individual capacity is also influenced by genetics, motivation level, fitness level, and previous injuries. Be aware of your body's unique warning signals of near over exertion and heed to them.



For more info contact:  
**Leslie Woolington**  
MAFES/MSU-Extension  
Risk Mgmt./Loss Control  
662.325.3204

**Work smarter, not harder!** Mechanical help is usually the best option. Simple assistance from things with wheels such as casters, a cart, a hand truck, or a pallet jack are good for moving along a same level path. For picking material up to another level a lift platform, ramp, conveyor, hoist or forklift is helpful. **Let the size, shape, and weight of the object along with the direction and distance of travel dictate the exact type of material handling device you choose.**

Material handling and storage areas go hand-in-hand. The storage of items can also create a hazard. When handling materials do it in a safe manner to keep yourself from injury, but also **avoid creating an environment that is unsafe for you and others while the material is stored.**

- Stack, block, or secure material to prevent sliding, falling, or collapsing. Materials should always be stored in a manner that is stable and self-supporting.
- Ensure non-compatible materials are not stored together and consider if the temperature of the storage area effects the material being stored.
- Maintain easy accessibility to the materials. If stacked with a forklift, but a person has to manually retrieve portions at a later date, is the material height and arrangement not creating safety risks.
- Maintain sufficient clearances within the storage area along pathways, allow for at least 24" of clear space below the ceiling, and mark areas to keep easy access to building mechanical features (electrical panels/valves).

## Sources:

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/osha2236.pdf>  
<https://www.whsshow.com.au/whssblogfeeder/safe-lifting-technique>