

Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin



How Much Can I Lift?

Is there a law about the maximum weight you can lift safely?

As with most other jurisdictions, Alberta has no specific law regarding the maximum weight a worker can lift. Restricting loads to a particular weight does not guarantee safety. You might injure yourself by reaching awkwardly to pick up a very light load or by slipping and losing your balance while handling a modest load.

Why not?

It's difficult to develop specific lifting requirements based only on weight. Other workplace and personal factors can contribute to injury. They include:

- the distance between the object being lifted and the front of your body
- the number of lifts you repeatedly perform
- the length of time during which you perform repeated lifts
- the size, shape and texture of the object you are lifting
- the distance you carry the object
- the height from which you lift the object (starting height)
- the height to which you lift the object (finishing height)
- whether or not the object has handholds
- the extent to which you twist your body
- your age, health, skill, stamina and fitness level.

What can you do to prevent injury?


- (1) Try to reduce the weight and size of the object you are lifting.
- (2) Keep objects you lift as close to your body as possible.
- (3) Try to have lifts begin at knee level but go no higher than shoulder level.
- (4) Avoid rotating or twisting movements when lifting or lowering a load.
- (5) Avoid awkward postures.
- (6) Make sure your stance is comfortable and solid.
- (7) Lift loads smoothly.
- (8) Pace your work.
- (9) Report symptoms early.

What can your employer do?


- (1) Reduce or eliminate heavy and repetitive lifting.
- (2) Reduce the weight and size of the object to be lifted.
- (3) Replace lifting and lowering by pushing and pulling.
- (4) Provide lifting equipment such as carts, dollies, jib cranes, scissor lifts, etc.
- (5) Reduce the distance that objects must be carried.
- (6) Provide workers with adequate clearance and headroom in their work areas.
- (7) Rotate workers among tasks which do not include lifting.
- (8) Reduce the distance between the worker and object(s) being lifted.
- (9) Suit lifting tasks to the worker's capabilities.
- (10) Keep track of symptoms and injuries
- (11) Have an ergonomic assessment done of the job and work area.

Contact us:

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 Throughout Alberta:
1-866-415-8690



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or

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Web Site



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Getting copies of OHS Act, Regulation & Code:

Queen's Printer



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Workplace Health and Safety



www.whs.gov.ab.ca/whs-legislation



Edmonton (780) 427-4952

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