

Beautiful Eastern Association of Snowmobile Trails



Safe Operating Procedures

SOP- 3: MATERIAL HANDLING AND LIFTING

Below are procedures which should be followed to reduce the hazards associated with lifting and handling material.

The following injuries may occur if material handling tasks are completed unsafely:

- Back injuries caused by lifting with poor posture
- Muscle strains or sprains which could lead to chronic pain.
- Pain, weakness and numbness in affected body parts.
- Falls from stools, ladders

Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear proper gloves (eg. leather) when handling objects that are hot / cold
- Wear the correct protective footwear to protect your feet from falling material or equipment rolling over them.
- Do not use belts.

Material Handling

- Organize your work so that your body is not strained in any way and your arms and shoulders are relaxed.
- Maintain a comfortable position while using tools (e.g. keep wrists straight).
- Try to reduce repetitive tasks as much as possible through task variation and appropriate work breaks
- When performing tasks that involve repetition, take regular mini breaks for stretching or moving to improve blood circulation and reduce muscle tension.
- Ask your doctor or physiotherapist for stretching exercises to assist in injury prevention.
- Avoid bending your back or twisting your body. Turn your feet instead
- Adjust your work surface so that it is approximately at elbow height. Work surfaces should be a little higher than elbow height for precision work and a little lower than elbow height when more force is required.
- Ensure items used more frequently are close by to avoid excessive reaching or twisting.

- When performing tasks that require prolonged standing, place one foot on a foot rest periodically to change posture and relieve muscle stress.

Before you lift:

- Ensure the pathway is clear.
- Know where the load will be placed.
- Determine whether lifting the object requires more than one person.
- Avoid lifting a load that is awkward or too heavy for you.
- Don't carry extremely heavy objects too far. Place the material on the ground or other solid surface and take periodic rest breaks.
- Unpack heavy cases before moving them.

When lifting, remember to:

- Move as close to the load as possible and position your feet about shoulder width apart.
- Test the object's weight by lifting up one end.
- Tighten your muscles to prepare for the lift.
- Grab the object firmly with your whole hand.
- Keep the load balanced.
- Bend your knees, keeping your back as straight as possible.
- Use your legs to lift the load (Not your back).
- Carry the object close to your body, with your elbows slightly bent and your upper arms straight.
- Move your feet to turn. Avoid twisting your body.
- When putting an object on a surface higher than the floor, place the edge of the load on the surface and slide it into place.
- Store all heavy items below eye level
- Use a ladder or step-stool to store items above eye level.
- Do not use a chair for standing, climbing or reaching.

Overhead Objects

Often trail workers find themselves having to work around heavy objects. An overhead branch or a post hung from a chain on a loader bucket can cause serious injury.

When working around suspended object:

- Never stand directly beneath the work. Nor should you stand under the machine component (loader). Use a sturdy pole to direct the work if necessary.
- Wear approved and appropriate head protection.
- If it is possible to safely direct the work with your hands, wear work-gloves to protect from cuts.
- Never lie under a suspended item or vehicle..

- Sprung objects are perilous because they may not look dangerous at a glance. A bowed branch from a fallen tree may look safe enough, but if it is disturbed at all, it may snap and strike violently. Sometimes, a vehicle may get hung up on an object like a rock or a branch. Though it might look like it's just sitting there, the slightest movement can quickly release the weight of the machine on you
- Never trust that a bowed branch will not be released or snap. Stay away and get someone trained in these situations
- Assume that anything under tension can let go at any time. Stand in a safe area while it is being worked on
- Never stand on the downhill side of a large rock, log or machine