



Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

# Quick Take on Safety

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## Storage

### TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Discusses the hazards associated with poor storage, best practices and prevention techniques to reduce hazards associated with unsafe storage.
- Purpose: Refreshes employees about storage hazards, prevention methods and reporting unsafe conditions.
- Preparation:
  - Read and become familiar with this Quick Take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
  - A small, light box can be used for a lifting demonstration if desired.
- Handouts: Quick Review of Safety: Storage

### Storage Hazards

When storing items, take care to reduce hazards. Hazards can range from falling items; unstable storage racks; strains from lifting, twisting or reaching; obstruction; and tripping exposures. Although storage might seem simple, if we don't give it careful thought, these hazards can become severe.

Fortunately, these risks can be safely controlled. Your health and safety are important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

### Storage Tips and Best Practices

- Always use a step stool or ladder to store or retrieve items that are kept at height. Do not use chairs or boxes or climb on the shelves. [*Instructor prompt:* Ask employees if there are any storage rooms or locations without an easily accessible step stool or ladder. Once reported, make sure one is provided inside or nearby.]
- Make sure shelves, racks, cabinets and stored items are secure. Tipping shelves, cabinets or falling items can cause serious injury and damage equipment. [*Instructor prompt:* ask about storage that may be tippy or methods to secure storage and reporting of unsafe storage.]
- When storing items, be aware of fire sprinklers. Items positioned too close to them can affect their operation. Maintain at least 18 inches of clearance below sprinkler heads.
- Position heavy or bulky items lower on the shelves to improve stability and reduce lifting or twisting hazards.
- Avoid storing heavy or awkward items above shoulder height.
- When lifting storing or retrieving an object:
  - Plan the route and ask for help if you need someone to hold doors or assist with the lift.
  - Face the load and bend at the knees rather than the waist.

- Avoid twisting. Instead pivot your feet to change directions.
- Lift with slow continuous pressure, rather than quick lifts.
- Carry the lift close to your body directly in front of you as long as you can see where you are going.
- Use hands or knees to build a bridge for additional support and to take weight off of your back for small items. [*Instructor prompt:* view the image to the right and model it or have an employee get up and demonstrate the technique.]
- Use carts or other devices when moving large amounts of materials. This reduces the strain on your body. But don't overload the cart to where you cannot see the path ahead.
- Items frequently accessed should be positioned in an easy to reach area.
- Avoid storing items that protrude into walkways. If it is unavoidable, reduce the hazard with cushioning, flagging or other means.
- Sharp edges protruding into walkways should be guarded, rounded down or otherwise addressed to prevent cuts. If unable to correct the hazard, it should be reported.
- Emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, first-aid kits, electrical panels and disconnects must be kept clear and unobstructed. Blocking these safety devices can affect their operation and delay response in an emergency.
  - Electrical panels must have at least 36 inches of clearance in front and 30 inches wide or the width of the panel, whichever is larger.
- Avoid storing items in boiler or mechanical rooms. These rooms often contain equipment, electrical breaker panels or other devices that require clear space around them so staff can tend to the equipment.
  - Storing items in these rooms can also increase the hazards for slips, trips and falls and delay responses in the event of an emergency in addition to increasing the fire risk.



### Reporting

- Maintaining safe storage is everyone's responsibility. If you see something that seems wrong, fix it or report it to a supervisor or member of management to address the hazard.

### Discussion Question

- How else can we prevent injuries involving storage?

### Additional Activities

- Use a small, lightweight box and have everyone practice safe lifts.

# Storage Session Planning and Review

Trainer

Training Date

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Department(s)

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## TRAINING GOALS

- Employees recognize the hazards associated with poor storage practices.
- Employees know the best practices involved with storage.
- Employees report unsafe acts or conditions.
- Accidents and injuries are reduced.

## RESOURCES

- Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust, Step Wisely Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention Campaign Materials including resources for storage rooms, [MCIT.org/step-wisely/](http://MCIT.org/step-wisely/)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders,” [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov)
- Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust, “Prevent Lifting Injuries from Nonroutine Activities,” [MCIT.org](http://MCIT.org)

## REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

## TRAINER COMMENTS

