SFM 5-MINUTE SOLUTIONS

A safety talk for successful injury prevention

Push/pull safety

Introduction

Our work requires us to push and pull carts, wheeled equipment and other objects. Recognize the risks related to pushing and pulling and understand how to minimize your risk of injury.

Push rather than pull

Whenever possible, push a load instead of pulling it:

- Pushing utilizes your strong leg muscles, instead of your weaker arm muscles
- If you pull a cart it can run over your feet
- If you pull a load while facing the direction of travel, your arm is stretched behind your body, placing your shoulder and back in an awkward position
- If you pull a load while walking backwards you're more likely to slip or trip and fall

Use good techniques

Good techniques reduce the risk of injury. Consider:

- Plan your path of travel. Make sure it is free of obstructions, slippery surfaces, etc.
- Keep your elbows in as close to your body as possible and forearms at elbow height
- Initiate the push smoothly using your strong leg muscles, not your arms and shoulders
- Always try to push "straight on" to the load
- Avoid leaning too far forward when pushing
- Avoid moving too fast. Pace yourself

Handles and push-point heights

- Handles and other push points should be at a comfortable height for you to avoid bending over or reaching too high
- Consider if handles can be modified to better suit your need
- When pushing and pulling, the handle should be located below the chest and above the hips

Other considerations

- Make sure the load is stable. Do not trying to catch a falling load
- For an object not on wheels, consider safely rotating the object back and forth in a forward direction, instead of pushing it
- Minimize the distance the loads need to be moved
- Reduce the size and weight of loads, when possible
- Notify your supervisor if equipment maintenance is required

Conclusion

Our goal is to recognize risk factors associated with pushing and pulling and use the best equipment and safest techniques possible in order to avoid injury.

Let's take a minute to go around the group and talk about what we can do to improve our material handling practices related to pushing and pulling.

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