Topic: Food Service – Manual Material Handling

Accidents involving manual material handling are one of the most common causes of injury in the workplace. It might seem simple, but taking a moment to pause, plan and think before lifting an object can greatly reduce the potential for ergonomic injuries such as muscle and back strains.

General Safety Tips

- Test the weight of the object before the move begins
- Create a clear pathway before starting the task
- Use a balanced stance – stand with your feet shoulder-width apart
- Keep the lower back in its natural/neutral arched position
- Maintain a secure grip on the item
- Lift with the legs and stand in a smooth, even motion
- Bend at the knees and hips before the lift begins
- If an even and smooth lift cannot be performed, the load is too heavy
- Never twist and lift, which can put additional stress on the back
- Pivot feet when changing directions
- Position feet in the direction of the transfer and pivot your body
- Store heavy, bulky materials on mid-level shelves, preferably on shelves near waist height
- Use a cart, dolly or load lifter for assistance moving objects – boxes, crates, barrels, etc.
- Conduct a two-person lift for heavy items that cannot be moved alone with a cart/dolly
- When standing for long periods, use anti-fatigue mats to reduce stress on backs and legs

Topics to Discuss

- Available equipment
- Identify potential ergonomic stressors
- Procedures to follow if a lifting injury has occurred
- Maintenance schedules for moving objects such as tables, equipment, etc.

Resources

For more information about this topic, visit:

- United Heartland Resource Library – Ergonomics: UnitedHeartland.com/resource-library
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration – Ergonomics: OSHA.gov/ergonomics

SafetyTalk

Topic:

Date:

Location:

Meeting Organizer:

Organization Name

Items Discussed:

Problem Areas or Concerns:

Attendees (Names/Signatures):

Comments:

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1-800-258-2667