

EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

Safely Lifting and Carrying Objects or Assisting a Fallen Guest

The goal of this Safety Talk is to reduce the number of worker injury incidents while lifting and carrying, or while assisting a fallen guest. Pushing and pulling of heavy loads also fall under this category of movement. By discussing the topic with your team, you can share your experience, finding practical ways to control the risks and stay safe.

Workers at ski resorts may be required to lift and carry heavy and awkwardly shaped objects. Working on slippery snow slopes, in unconsolidated snow, or with time pressures are all factors that increase the risk of muscle strains. The most common injury that occurs with these types of movements are back strains, but knees and shoulders are also at risk of musculoskeletal injury (MSI). Those with a history of back trouble may also be more susceptible to injury.

Please consider the following tips to decrease your risk of injury during lifting and carrying activities.

Safety Tips

Tasks such as snow removal, assisting a fallen guest, ski lift loading, and injured guest and toboggan handling all require the raising and movement of heavy, awkwardly shaped loads, while standing on unstable surfaces. Many similar risks are involved when **pushing and pulling loads**. Working efficiently will save you time in the long run, so **plan your lift** using these procedures to improve safety for everyone.

Take your time. Don't rush! Ensure the **area is safe to work in**, be aware of your environment and surroundings, including possible collisions, slope angle and surface. If appropriate and possible set up a safety perimeter, clear the area of any obstructions, stomp down loose snow, and cut snow steps or set up guide ropes if necessary and if you are trained to do so.

Think before lifting or carrying. Assess the weight of the load and **ask for help when necessary**. Whether pulling a toboggan or lifting objects, if the load feels heavy or is awkward get another person to help, or use a mechanical assist if possible.

Create as much stability as possible. Start with a solid stance, feet shoulder width apart and one foot slightly in front of the other. Stand close to your object with a neutral spine (slight curve in your lower back) and tighten your core slightly. Try to **maintain this posture and activated core** throughout the lift.

Avoid twisting and leaning sideways.

Grasp the object firmly. For slippery objects or those with a difficult shape, attach handles or use a loading strap when appropriate.

Carry the load close to your body and waist. When your arms are away from your center of gravity the load on your spine is increased.

If **assisting a guest, get them organized before you start lifting.** Remove their skis or board, have them brace their legs on the downhill side and grasp a pole to provide leverage. Make sure the guest won't start sliding when they stand up.

Lift and lower with your legs, not your back. Slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to stooping or squatting.

Ensure you are Fit for Duty. Maintain your **health and wellness** at all times. Come to work **well rested, hydrated and fed**. Staying physically **fit for the job, warming up** your muscles prior to work, and taking a **short break** when you become fatigued will go a long way towards preventing strains.

Dress in appropriate layers for the temperature and conditions. Ensure that your **footwear** allows the necessary movement and includes slip-resistant soles or cleats in good condition.

Additional Resources

- Your ski area policy and procedures.
- [WorkSafeBC Lifting & Handling Resources](#)
- Ski Safety Talk: [Snow Shoveling](#)
- More Ski Area Safety Resources: go2hr.ca/skisafety