



Policy Name <b>SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR MATERIAL HANDLING</b>	Policy Number: <b>2310</b>
Approved By: Executive Committee	Effective Date: October 19, 2011
Classification: Dietary and Kitchen	Date Revised: October 11, 2018
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## POLICY

To define the Standard Operating Procedures in a manner that informs and instructs Salvation Army Agape Hospice staff on the key health and safety points and controls to remember when performing tasks in the workplace.

## BACKGROUND

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 (e.g. leather) when handling objects that are hot/cold or have sharp edges.
- Wear the correct protective footwear to protect your feet from falling material or equipment rolling over them. **No open toed or open heeled shoes.**

## PROCEDURE

### *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 for 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.

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- When performing tasks that require prolonged standing, place one foot on a foot rest periodically to change posture and relieve muscle stress.
- Push carts and dollies instead of pulling them.
- Reduce glare on your monitor to prevent awkward neck posture

*Before you lift*

- Ensure your pathway is clear before you lift.
- Know where the load will be placed before lifting.
- Determine whether lifting object requires more than one person.
- Avoid lifting a load that is awkward or too heavy for you. Get assistance and/or use an appropriate material handling device (i.e. a trolley, cart, dolly, hoist, hand truck). As a general rule, if the load is too big for one, get help. If the load is too big for two, use mechanical equipment to help you.
- Don't carry extremely heavy objects too far. Place the material on the ground or other solid surface and take periodic rest breaks.
- Ensure material is packaged by the supplier in weights and sizes that are manageable.
- Unpack heavy cases before moving them.
- Carry items in smaller containers or use a trolley.
- Do not hurry up or down stairs
- Use the handrail to guide you when carrying materials on stairs.

*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 as opposed to 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 (e.g. rack), place the edge of the load on the surface and slide it into place.

*When storing or retrieving stored products*

- Store all heavy items below eye level.
- Store the heaviest objects at least 30 cm/12 inches above the floor.
- Use a ladder or step-stool to store items above eye level.



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- Do not use a chair for standing, climbing or reaching.
- When retrieving items from a box, try cutting out one wall so that you can reach in the side instead of reaching down from the top (which involves awkward wrist posture).

*When working at a computer:*

- Keep wrists straight when typing.
- Have upper arms hanging relaxed at the shoulder.
- Use wrist rests only when not typing to avoid putting pressure soft side of wrist.
- Keep the top 1/3 of the screen at eye level. The monitor may need to be lowered if you are using bifocal or multifocal lenses.
- Position your monitor directly in front of you.
- Keep your back and neck straight.
- The curve of your lower back should be supported by the backrest of the chair.
- Adjust your chair so that your thighs are approximately parallel with the floor.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor or on a foot rest.
- Position the mouse at the same height as the keyboard and directly beside it.
- Rest the elbow of the arm you mouse with on the arm of the chair.

## **REFERENCE**

“Safe Operating Procedures for Material Handling.” The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory, [OH&S Manual 2018, P. 70](#)