

Hand Truck SAFETY

While hand truck safety may sound like a minor issue, proper use of hand trucks can reduce one of the nations' leading workplace safety issues - back injuries.



When to Use Hand Trucks

Many back injuries are a result of lifting heavy or awkward loads. These injuries can sometimes be prevented simply by using a hand truck. There is no concrete rule on when to use hand trucks, but common sense should tell you when a load is too heavy to lift on your own.

Hand Truck Hazards

What takes a little more thought than deciding when to use a hand truck, is choosing the right hand truck for the job. Make sure you choose one that is the right size and designed to handle the load. Curved bed hand trucks, for example, are designed to handle drums. With this in mind, think about loading and operating the hand truck safely.

Different Types of Hand Trucks

Two-Wheeled Hand Trucks

Two-wheeled hand trucks look easy to handle, but it's just as easy to lose the load and injure yourself or a co-worker if you don't keep safety in mind. When loading any hand truck you should:

- Follow proper lifting techniques to place the load on the hand truck.
- Use your legs, and keep your back straight.
- Place the heaviest objects on the bottom.
- Position the load so it rests on the axles so the weight will be carried by the truck and not the handles.
- Ensure the load will not slip, shift or fall by securing the load to the truck.
- Move forward - not backward- with a hand truck. If you're going down a slope, keep the load in front of you. If you're going up, keep it behind you.
- Move slowly and cautiously.
- Ensure you can see over the load.



Powered Hand Trucks

Powered hand trucks are the most dangerous kind of hand truck. That's why operators must be trained to use them. Some things to keep in mind when using powered hand trucks include:

- Always keep a hand on the handle and face the direction of travel.
- Enter elevators by backing in.
- Stay alert for pedestrians and obstructions.
- Stop at intersections to avoid collisions.
- Never ride or permit others to ride on the truck.
- Never operate a powered truck with wet or greasy hands.
- Move chemicals only if they are in approved containers.



Four-Wheeled Hand Trucks

Four-wheeled hand trucks are similar to the two-wheeled versions. However, pay extra attention to loading procedures.

Four-wheeled trucks can be easily tipped, so make sure that your load is balanced and secured. These hand trucks should usually be pushed rather than pulled, except for those trucks equipped with a fifth wheel and a pulling handle.

Also be sure that you can see over the load. If this is impossible and you can't reduce the size of the load, get someone to serve as a guide. Take extra caution to place your hands properly so they won't get crushed by the load.



Conclusion

By keeping these simple tips in mind, we should be able to steer clear of any major hand truck incidents and injuries.

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