



FS/NAAF GARRISON SAFETY OFFICE

Outsmart the Darkness: Your Weekly Safety Spotlight™



Ergonomics: Lifting

Ergonomics is the science of matching tools and tasks to the work environment. In other words, ergonomics tries to make your job fit you, rather than making you fit your job. The purpose of ergonomics is to reduce or eliminate injuries and illnesses that can result from stress on muscles, nerves, and joints.

Proper Lifting Techniques

Lifting Technique

- **Plan & Position:** Before you lift, assess the weight and where you're going. Position your feet shoulder-width apart, close to the object, with a firm stance. Get a good grip!
- **Lift with Your Legs, Keep it Close:** Bend at your knees and hips – not your back – keeping your back straight. Hold the object close to your body throughout the lift. Lift smoothly using your leg muscles and avoid twisting.

Stacking Boxes

- **Stable Base & Weight Distribution:** Always start with the heaviest boxes on the bottom layer. Ensure the base layer is evenly stacked and covers the full area to provide a stable foundation.
- **Interlock & Maximum Height:** Stack boxes in interlocking layers (like bricks) to distribute weight and prevent shifting. Avoid stacking too high – generally, no more than 6-7 boxes high, and be mindful of box weight limits and overhead clearance!

Moving Boxes Around

- **Clear the Path & Communicate:** Before moving any boxes, ensure your path is clear of obstacles (people, equipment, debris). Communicate clearly – say "Box moving!" or use a horn/signal – to alert others to your movement.
- **Use Equipment or Proper Technique:** For heavier boxes, always use appropriate equipment like hand trucks, pallet jacks, or forklifts (and be properly trained!). For lighter boxes, maintain a good posture, keep the

Precautions, Hazard Abatement, Etc.

- **Regular Inspections & Maintenance:** Conduct frequent inspections of the work area – floors, racking, equipment, lighting – and promptly address any identified issues like damage, spills, or malfunctioning equipment. Preventative maintenance is key!
- **Clear Aisles & Designated Walkways:** Maintain clear and well-marked aisles and walkways free from obstructions. This reduces trip hazards and ensures safe passage for personnel and equipment.
- **Proper Storage & Stacking Procedures:** Enforce proper stacking techniques (as discussed previously!) and ensure loads are stable and within weight limits. Secure items to prevent falling objects.
- **Effective Signage & Warnings:** Utilize clear and visible signage to identify potential hazards – wet floors, forklift traffic, restricted areas – and provide necessary warnings.
- **Employee Training & Reporting:** Provide comprehensive safety training to all employees covering hazard identification, safe work practices, and emergency procedures. Encourage employees to report any hazards they observe without fear of reprisal.