



Good Practice Guide



Factory Improvement Programme

SAFE LIFTING

Labour safety plays an important role in ensuring a productive workplace and improving workplace cooperation. The use of lifting machine and appropriate vehicles helps workers to carry heavy things and get things from high shelves more easily, quickly and safely. In addition, for manual lifting, the use of the appropriate position helps workers to lift heavy items more easily and safely.

PROSPECTIVE USERS:

This practice should be applied by all workers who have to lift heavy items such as materials, or semi-final and final products.

This practice should be applied in all kinds of factories.

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED

- Production items such as materials or semi-final and final products are often stored in large and heavy boxes or bundles or are located on high shelves. Moving these materials and products around the factory requires lifting and/or carrying machines such as forklifts.
- Lifting heavy items manually can pose serious health problems for workers.

PROCESS

This practice involves having sufficient and appropriate forklifts which can be used for heavy-lifting or transporting. Guidance is also provided to workers on the proper use of such machines to avoid injury to themselves. In addition, training on appropriate positions for the manual lifting of heavy items helps workers to do their jobs more safely and easily.

Steps in implementation

Use of forklifts and other equipment for lifting

1. Provide sufficient and appropriate forklifts or other equipment to help workers to lift heavy items, get products from high shelves and carry heavy loads within the factory or for delivery.
2. Designate specific workers to use these machines and prevent any other workers from using them.
3. Provide proper training to the designated workers on how to use the forklifts.
4. Ensure that usage instructions and all controls of the lifting machines are in a language that workers can understand. This may involve putting stickers on machine controls in local languages.
5. If a worker needs to access products from high shelving, use a forklift to lift the worker rather than have the worker climb up the shelf. This helps to ensure the safety of the worker while also making his/her work much easier.
6. Stack products, boxes and materials on pallets for easier loading onto forklifts.
7. Use trolleys to stack and carry heavy semi-final products. Such trolleys are convenient for workers to move large amounts of items, and are especially useful to carry heavy loads for a short distance with minimum elevation.
8. After use, forklifts and equipment must be kept in a secure, regulated area in the factory.
9. Continuous maintenance of all machinery is very important in ensuring that they work well. Develop and implement a regular maintenance schedule for each machine and ensure that all maintenance is done by a qualified mechanic.

Manual lifting

1. It is always better to eliminate manual lifting if possible. However, if the workers cannot avoid carrying heavy loads, workers must be trained on how to lift heavy items in a manner that is easier and safer for them.
2. In case of manual heavy lifting, try to use a method which requires loads to be elevated as little as possible over the ground level.
3. When lifting heavy materials manually onto a vehicle, always try to match the height of the vehicle bed to that of the loading areas.
4. A platform is also useful when goods have to be carried manually. It reduces the risk of injuries and requires the use of less energy as the weight is lifted from a height (e.g. one metre) instead of from the floor.
5. Always use the correct lifting technique by keeping the back straight while raising the load. Use the muscle power of the legs and the gripping power of the hands.
6. Never associate the handling of smaller weights to lower productivity. Optimum efficiency is usually attained with weight below 20 kg.





RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Appropriate types of lifting and carrying equipment.
- Sufficient guidance in local languages.
- Training for workers on how to use the equipment safely and effectively.
- Training for workers on how to manually lift heavy items.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

- Investment for purchasing lifting machines.
- Continuous maintenance of the machines.
- Changing habits of workers requires time and effort.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- Worker safety.
- Better productivity.

INDICATORS FOR MONITORING

- Appropriate lifting and carrying machines and other equipment are provided.
- Workers know how to use the machines and equipment in the correct manner.
- Workers use lifting and carrying machines and equipment in the relevant situations.
- Workers know how to manually lift heavy items safely.

Further Information Available:

FIP References:

Module 6 - Health and Safety

Module 3 - Productivity

Funding for the Factory Improvement Programme is provided by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the United States Department of Labor.