

Material handling: plan the move and the reach

Talk 21 of 52 | Week 21 | Daily jobsite safety

Leader: adapt this talk to today's electrical work and site procedures. See the educational-use and liability notice on page 2.

START THE CONVERSATION

A delivery of fixtures, conduit, and panels arrives before the work area is ready. A few minutes of staging can prevent repeated lifting, awkward carrying, and unnecessary strain throughout the shift.

KEY TALKING POINTS

1. Plan handling around the load, route, landing area, and available assistance. Use suitable handling equipment and trained personnel where needed. Do not assume that a weight one person lifted yesterday is appropriate for everyone or for a different posture and route.
2. Electrical job example: fixtures are stored at floor level and repeatedly lifted overhead. Ask whether staging, a work platform, or a different sequence would reduce awkward handling. Improve the setup before telling workers simply to be more careful.
3. Consider the dimensions of the load as well as its weight. Long conduit can obstruct vision or strike someone during a turn. Plan doorways, corners, stairs, and shared routes before the move, and coordinate with people working on the other side.
4. Discuss grip, hand clearance, and where the load will be set down. A team move needs a shared signal and clear roles. If someone loses grip or the path becomes blocked, stop through the agreed method rather than asking the crew to catch or twist around a shifting load.
5. Look at repetitive work too. Cutting, stripping, and overhead fastening can involve awkward posture or repeated force. Ask workers what part of the setup is difficult and consider suitable tools or work positioning through the supervisor's planning process.
6. Keep stock organized at the point of use without obstructing access. The best storage spot for a delivery may not be the best location for installation. Review staging as the project progresses so material does not need to be moved several unnecessary times.
7. Encourage early reporting of discomfort or a handling problem. Record one improvement the crew can make today and assign an owner. This discussion is about adapting the work to people and equipment, not testing how much an individual can carry.

ASK THE CREW

1. Which move or repeated reach creates the most strain today?
2. What setup change would reduce it?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Review one upcoming material move and arrange the route, assistance, and landing area before lifting.

OSHA SOURCES / FURTHER READING

OSHA: Ergonomic principles for electrical contractors

Attendance & action record

Material handling: plan the move and the reach

Date: _____ Leader: _____

Company / jobsite: _____

Site hazards and controls discussed:

Follow-up action / responsible person / due date:

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Participant name	Signature / acknowledgment

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