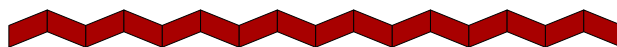




BACK PROTECTION: MOVING ITEMS



Safety & Security Fact Sheet

Organize and plan. Anyone working in a school has to move materials at some point. It might be as simple as organizing office supplies in a cabinet or as involved as relocating large pieces of furniture. If an individual takes few minutes to plan necessary moves at the beginning of any task, he or she may prevent personal injury and injury to others. The time spent to recruit assistance or borrow a dolly could prevent a painful back injury that might take months or even years to heal.

Look at the whole task, not just the item to be moved. When planning for a move, determine the easiest way to get the job done. Ask for help if it is necessary. Eliminate factors that complicate the move. If students are in the area of the move, wait until the area is clear. If a dolly would make the job easier, take the time to locate one and use it. Sometimes it helps to break the job down into smaller pieces. An example of this is removing the contents of a file cabinet reducing the weight.

Prepare for the physical activity involved There has never been a successful athlete who did not take time to warm up his or her muscles before using them. Several minutes of gentle stretching will allow muscles to take the load instead of the spine. Dress for the occasion. Open-toed shoes or shoes with slippery soles could contribute to an injury. Take a minute to change shoes, and remove jewelry that might get in the way. Finally, use proper lifting techniques that rely on the strength of leg muscles to prevent strain to the spine.

FIVE STEPS FOR PROTECTING THE BACK WHEN MOVING OBJECTS

1. **Test the item to be moved.** Heavy things can come in small packages. Carefully test-move the item to determine approximately how heavy it is.
2. **Ask someone else to move the item.** If physically unable to lift or move a heavy item, ask someone more suited to the job.
3. **Ask someone to help move the item.** Cut the workload in half.
4. **Use a mechanical assist.** A hand truck or dolly will take the load off the back, especially if there are a number of items to be moved.
5. **Make sure the route is clear of items and people.** Check the moving route to prevent tripping or stopping suddenly.

If you need assistance, call the safety section at 571-423-2010.