

## Instructional Staff Moving-Day Safety

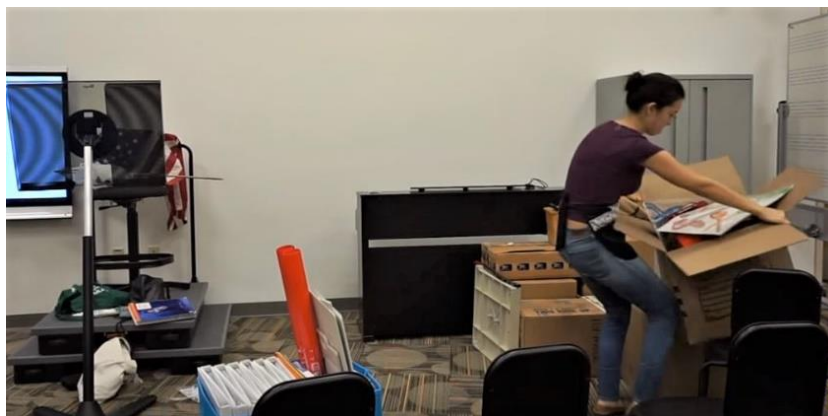
**February 2019**

The workers compensation group sees numerous injuries every year when instructional staff move classrooms items from one location to another. Two of the greatest risks to staff during these moves are: hurting backs/shoulders while lifting/carrying objects and; tripping and falling over items being packed. Below are tips to consider before and during your move.

### *Tips for YOUR Safe Move*

#### ***Planning***

Plan your move. Identify what stays, what gets tossed and what gets packed. Determine when and where to toss items and where new classroom items are going before moving them. Determine what gets packed & moved first and last. Assess the items to be moved and determine a general workflow the day of the move for packing and staging boxes once filled. Avoid double-handling items.



Wear the right clothing the day of the move, especially your shoes! No flip-flops, open-back or open-toed shoes. Wear comfortable clothing and avoid wearing rings, necklaces and clothing that is so baggy it gets caught on items being packed and moved. Bring a water bottle and a pair of lightweight work gloves, just in case!

#### ***Protecting Your Back and Shoulders***

Remember, you may not get everything done in one day. Don't work past your limits. Take your time, drink water while you work, and take breaks when needed to recuperate.

Consider your overall plan. Designate a packing table or desk where you may comfortably stand up to wrap and pack items. Never pack on your knees at floor level. Move smaller item(s) to the packing table (not the floor), then pack them at the workstation. To raise the working height of lower worktables, tape and flip over a box and pack items on it. Bring items close to the table edge then pick them up to place in boxes.

Designate an area where packed boxes and other items to be moved will be staged once packed. Stage filled boxes by the doorway so those working together don't have to cross paths to work. Maintain aiseways!

Pack everything in boxes. Don't carry items around (or to your car) where you may strain something or trip and fall. Large boxes can be oriented to pack larger flat items such as pictures and posters. Most large boxes have instructions on them for packing such items.

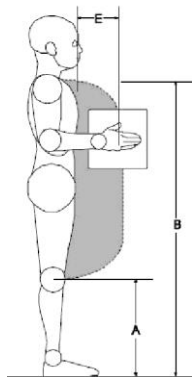
Pack boxes fully so they don't sag when other boxes are stacked on top of them. Place loosely crumpled packing paper in the bottom of boxes to provide extra padding. It's better to divide and pack heavier items into multiple boxes rather than trying to move one heavy one. Boxes cost a couple of dollars. Back and shoulder injuries are much costlier.

Use enough packing paper and try to combine heavy items with lighter items in each box, whenever possible. Pack the biggest, heaviest item(s) first, then add smaller items, filling in spaces with loosely crumpled packing paper as you load.

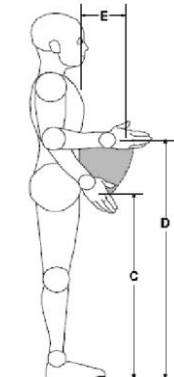
Try to handle items being moved and packed boxes only once. Moving boxes more than necessary wastes time and exposes your body to unnecessary force and repetition. Think ahead!

When possible, avoid placing boxes on the floor or picking them up from floor level. Perform work at waist level when possible.

Adequate working height



Optimal working/packing height



Check your boxes for handholds. Some boxes have cut outs that can be pushed in prior to packing the box. These cut outs provide improved grasp points for easier handling.

Use packing tape dispensers instead of pocket knives, razor cutters or other cutting tools to tape boxes.

We have all heard these before, but when lifting boxes:

- If you didn't load the box, push at a corner to determine its approximate weight before lifting it.
- Get directly over the box, squat down, and grasp it by the handholds or at alternate corners.
- Don't bend at the waist, keep your elbows in to your sides and keep the box close to your body. Spinal compression forces increase significantly when loads move away from the body.
- When lifting and carrying items, point your lead foot in the direction of travel to open up hips and reduce spinal compression forces.

- Repeat the process when unloading boxes; elbows in, limit reaching and minimize back bending.

Avoid reaching out and pulling items toward yourself. Move yourself closer to the item to reduce back and shoulder strains. Always use a two-hand carts or dollies for moving items. Avoid lifting!

Remember to push, not pull, dollies, carts or other items unless absolutely necessary. Pulling can strain upper extremities.

Ask for help with heavy items and volunteer your assistance to others. Team lifting works!

### ***Preventing Trips and Falls***

Moving days are very busy. Consider your plan, room layout and remember that one of the most important items in preventing injuries during classroom moves is the maintenance of open walkways so workers aren't climbing over or around packing paper, boxes and room contents. Keep aiseways clear!

It bears repeating...wear the right shoes!

Keep your packing table and immediate work area neat. Remove clutter and trip hazards from your work area and maintain housekeeping when packing.

Don't climb on desks and chairs to access elevated items in your classroom. Use only approved ladders or stepstools. Leave that old wood ladder or old stepstool at home. Pre-plan and ask custodial personnel to remove elevated items as needed.

