

Maximum Lift Policy

What is a maximum lift policy? Why do you need one?

A maximum lift policy is a policy statement issued and enforced by top management providing guidelines and instructions for lifting in the workplace. Having this policy reinforces the importance of proper lifting in the workplace and holds employees accountable for lifting no more than the maximum amount specified.

Key Components

A key component of the Maximum Lift Policy is the proper lifting method:

- Lift with your legs, not your back,
- Hold the load close, and
- Avoid twisting while lifting, use your feet.

Setting Policy

Your company can set the maximum lift amount at a weight you think is safe for your employees to lift. NIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) recommends a maximum lift of 50 lbs. You can always set it for a lower amount but it's not recommended you set a higher weight limit. Encourage your employees to know and respect their individual lifting limitations.

If employees can lift only a maximum weight, you must determine how they will handle weights over the maximum. They should be able to utilize mechanical means including carts, dollies, pallet jacks, forklifts, hoists, etc. Team lifts are also a possibility.

You may need to help them determine the weight of items. Most of us don't know what 50 lbs. feels like and looks can often be deceiving. You may have to weigh items to make this determination. This could make an eye-opening training meeting.

Cal/OSHA publications:

Ergonomic Guide to Manual Material Handling:

http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/mmh.pdf

Lifting safer: http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/liftingsafer.pdf