

Back care—Lifting sheet materials 1

Explain dangers

Lifting sheets of material can pose several musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) hazards:

- **High forces:** Depending on the size and thickness of the sheet, handling it can place high forces on your body.
- **Awkward postures:** The large size of sheets and how the sheets are stored can lead to several awkward postures (e.g., bending if stored at lower levels, twisting, lifting above shoulder height, etc.).
- **Repetition/duration:** Depending on the scope of the job, many tasks can require lifting several sheets throughout the course of your shift.
- **Contact stress:** High contact stress can occur on your hands and shoulders.

Identify controls

When planning to lift sheet materials, consider controls that eliminate or reduce MSD hazards through changes to the work design. For example, place sheets on a height adjustable table so that you and your co-workers do not need to lift sheets from lower levels.

When you cannot avoid lifting sheet material, try to use team lifting practices to manage the forces and awkward shape. These are particularly useful when you need to perform the lift several times.

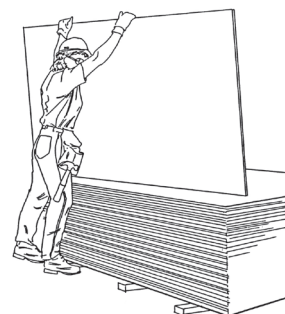
Use the following steps to reduce MSD risks when lifting sheets of material by yourself.

- 1 Grasp the sheet on the long side at the mid-point.



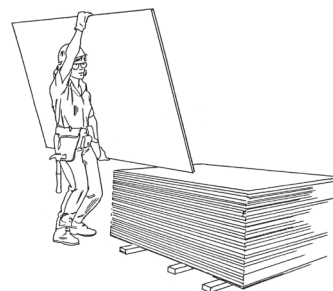
- 2

Tip the sheet up, then slide the sheet partway off the pile. This helps bring the weight of the object closer to your body.



- 3

Bend at the knees, maintaining the normal curve in your lower back. Grasp the sheet above and below at mid-point.



- 4

Keep your back erect while carrying the sheet. Avoid leaning to one side.



Demonstrate

Demonstrate how to lift sheet materials while you talk.