

# SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

## MOVING MATERIALS SAFELY

As classrooms and other campus workspaces reopen and we start to move back into them, we may need to bring many items along with us. Here are some tips to help avoid injury and to ensure that you and your items get to where they need to be safely:

- ❖ **Wear suitable clothing.** Wear flat-soled, close-toed shoes for better footing and to lessen the chances of injury if you trip or drop something on your feet. Wear clothes you can move easily in (including bending down with your legs), but avoid baggy clothes, loose accessories, and long jewelry that could catch on something and snag. Tie long loose hair back.
- ❖ **Avoid overpacking.** Put heavier items in smaller boxes, and save larger boxes for lighter items. Do not try to shove everything into one box for convenience; this could make the load too heavy or unbalanced to move safely. It could also compromise the integrity of the box, causing it to break open and spill the contents.
- ❖ **Follow proper lifting techniques:** If you need to lift an item that is on or close to the ground, first determine if it can be lifted safely (not too heavy or big). If it can, stand close to the item, facing it with a wide stance. Bend your knees while keeping your upper body upright to bring yourself close to ground level. Keeping a straight back, grasp the item and bring it close to you, then tighten your stomach muscles and lift with your legs to a standing position. Do not twist while bending or lifting or bend at your waist while standing in order to lift it; this can put excess strain on your back and lead to injuries.
- ❖ **Use mechanical lifting/carrying aides.** Dollies, carts, wheeled crates, or other similar items are wonderful tools to help transport items without having to bear their full weight. Do not overload them or load them unevenly, or else the items may fall off or the aide may be too heavy or unwieldy to use and move safely.
- ❖ **Ask for help.** Sometimes an item can't be lifted safely on your own. In this case, ask someone else to help you and perform a team lift. You can also ask for help with keeping the path of travel clear; for instance, asking someone to hold a door open for you rather than trying to hold it open yourself while carrying items.
- ❖ **Be sure you can see where you are going.** Carrying too many items at once can block your field of view. This makes travel dangerous since you could trip or fall over an item in your path or run into a wall or other obstacle that you couldn't see. You may want to go through your path of travel empty-handed at first to make sure the way is clear before carrying items through it.
- ❖ **Take additional trips if necessary.** It is better to spread the load out across multiple trips if you cannot safely transport all items in one trip.

