

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

MATERIAL STORAGE

Don't stack too high or heavy.

When materials are stacked too high, or if heavier items are stacked on top of lighter ones, the storage can become unstable and fall over. This can damage the items, cause an injury, and/or create a barrier across exit paths in an emergency.

- ❖ Never stack heavy items on top of light ones, or large items on top of small ones.
- ❖ When possible, store heavy items within the Optimum Lifting Zone (between the shoulders and knees).
- ❖ Keep storage even and straight. Leaning stacks can tip over and fall. Corners or edges sticking out can trip or catch on someone walking by.
- ❖ Use a ladder if you need to reach items overhead rather than overreaching or stepping on something unstable.
- ❖ Keep storage at least 18 inches below fire sprinklers and 24 inches below ceilings with no sprinklers to help prevent the spread of fire.



Keep aisles clear.

Aisleways and walkways should always be left clear so people can move freely through the space. Cluttered storage can cause a delay in getting out in an emergency and can lead to injuries.

- ❖ Keep walkways to the storage area clear, as well as walkways through the storage. This includes storage boxes as well as trash and loose items.
- ❖ Hoses, extension cords, and other long, thin items should be stored coiled up and out of walkways.

Use storage containers in good condition.

If a box or container is damaged, it could fall apart and spill its contents or someone could get injured when trying to move it. If the damaged box is at the bottom of a stack, it could cause the whole stack to fall over.

- ❖ If an empty box or container is damaged, discard it and use an undamaged box instead.
- ❖ If a box or container that is currently being used for storage is damaged, transfer the items to a new container and discard the old damaged one.

Secure shelving.

Tall shelves should be secured to the wall or floor to prevent them from tipping over if hit, in an earthquake, or if unstable storage is placed on it.