

Setting up the classroom

Objective

Lead a discussion with teachers about starting the school year safely.

Background: Injuries often happen at the beginning of the school year, when teachers are setting up their classrooms. (We'll cover end-of-year issues in a separate training.)

Consider asking: Do you know someone who experienced muscle soreness or an injury while setting up their classroom?

Ask: What are some activities during classroom set-up that increase injury risk?

- Lifting and moving boxes to and from high shelves
- Carrying and moving materials from vehicles to classrooms
- Using ladders to hang decorations
- Other risks?

Ask: What can we do to decrease injury risk?

- Use equipment to make the task easier
 - What is available: carts, hand trucks, step stools, ladders, etc.
 - Where is it located?
 - Is training required?
- Get help, especially with heavy or awkward items. Work in teams when possible.
- Don't overload boxes. Keep them at a manageable weight.
- Avoid storing heavy or awkward items on high shelves.
- Avoid rushing. Focus on the task at hand.

- When lifting, use good body mechanics
 - Test the load.
 - Keep the load close to your body.
 - Flex your knees.
 - Maintain the curve in your lower back (push your tailbone back and look forward).
 - Avoid twisting.
- Practice ladder safety.
 - Participate in ladder safety training. This Oregon OSHA publication has detailed information, visit: <http://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/3083.pdf>
 - Use the right ladder or step stool for the job (no chairs, desks, or boxes).
 - Inspect the ladder before using to ensure it is in good repair.
 - Move the ladder instead of reaching to the side.

Ask: Any safety concerns or suggestions?