

# 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: [osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/3083.pdf](https://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?