

# Closing the classroom

## Objective

Lead a discussion about how to finish the school year safely.

**Background:** Similar to the start of the school year, injuries often increase at the end of the year when staff move out materials and take down decorations.

Consider asking: Do you know someone who experienced muscle soreness or an injury while cleaning up at the end of the year?

**Ask:** What tasks may increase our risk of injury during end-of-year clean-up?

- Lifting and moving boxes to and from high shelves
- Carrying and moving materials from classrooms to vehicles
- Using ladders to take down 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 before lifting.
  - 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 to ensure it is in good repair.
  - Move the ladder instead of reaching to the side.

**Ask:** Any safety concerns or suggestions?