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## Step Stools

### *Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)/Ergonomic Guidance for Stakeholders Regarding Use of Step Stools in Industrial Workplaces*



In addition to legal requirements for worker instruction/training in the use of equipment and the maintenance of equipment, workplace parties should consider safe practices in the use of step stools, such as: the correct choice of step stool in specific circumstances, its weight capacity, and the environmental conditions in which the step stool is being used in the workplace.

The MSD/Ergonomic **safe practices** that should also be considered while:

#### **Climbing/Descending, including:**

- Carrying an object that does not affect the worker's ability to climb/descend, maintain balance or block their field of view

#### **Receiving/Placing/Removing Objects, including:**

##### *Range of Movement*

- Keeping hands above knee level when reaching downwards to grasp objects
- Keeping belt buckle within centre of stool when reaching to side
- Avoiding leaning backwards while moving object to its destination (e.g. size of object interferes with its movement across the stool)
- Avoiding rising up on toes when reaching above to place object

##### *Standing Posture*

- Keeping both feet on the stool

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### *Characteristics of Object*

- Lifting object with one hand weighing **less than** 9 kg male, 6 kg female
- Lifting object with two hands weighing **less than**:

	Male	Female
Lift below shoulder height	<21 kg	<12 kg
Lift above shoulder height	<16 kg	<8 kg

### **Working, including:**

- Keeping belt buckle within centre of stool when reaching to side e.g. belt buckle does not go beyond base of stool
- Keeping both feet on the stool
- Avoiding applying forceful or jerky pushing/pulling movements where there is the potential for an unexpected reaction

This Guidance Note has been prepared to assist the workplace parties in understanding their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. It is not intended to replace the OHSA or its regulations and reference should always be made to the official version of the legislation.

It is the responsibility of the workplace parties to ensure compliance with the legislation. This Guidance Note does not constitute legal advice and has no legal effect. If you require assistance with respect to the interpretation of the legislation and its potential application in specific circumstances, please contact your legal counsel.

While this Guidance Note will also be available to Ministry of Labour inspectors, they will apply and enforce the OHSA and its regulations based on the facts as they may find them in the workplace. This Guidance Note does not affect their enforcement discretion in any way.

For further information on ladder safety contact your health and safety association  
[www.healthandsafetyontario.ca](http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca)