

## Step Stools

### *Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) Prevention/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.

Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) prevention/ergonomic **safe practices** should be considered while:

#### **Climbing/Descending**

- Carry objects so as not to impair ability to climb/descend, maintain balance, and preserve field of view

#### **Receiving/Placing/Removing Objects**

##### *Range of movement*

- Keep hands above knee level when reaching downward to grasp objects
  - Keep belt buckle (i.e., navel) within centre of stool when reaching sideways
  - Avoid leaning backward while moving object (i.e., size of object should not interfere with its movement across the stool)
  - Avoid rising up on toes when reaching up above to place object
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### *Standing posture*

- Keep both feet on the stool

### *Characteristics of object*

- Lift object with one hand (less than 9 kg, male; 6 kg, female)
- Lift object with two hands:

	Male	Female
Lifting:	object lighter than:	object lighter than:
below shoulder height	21 kg	12 kg
above shoulder height	16 kg	8 kg

### **Working**

- Keep belt buckle within centre of stool (i.e., not beyond base of stool) when reaching to side
- Keep both feet on the stool
- Avoid 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).