

EMS Lifting Safety Checklist

- 1) **Lifting Safety Training** - The first rule of lifting is to always keep your back in an upright position and lift without twisting. Avoid bending at the waist. Position your feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other. You may need to shuffle your feet in order to maintain a strong base. Avoid any kind of swinging motion when lifting as well.
- 2) **Proper Holds** - If you do not have a proper hold, you will not be able to bear your share of the weight, or you may lose your grasp with one or both hands, possibly causing a back injury to one of your team. Use a power grip to get the maximum force from the hands. Hands should be at least 10 inches apart. Palms face up and fingers in complete contact with the object being lifted.
- 3) **Weight Distribution** - When lifting and carrying keep weight as close to your body as possible.
- 4) **Clear The Path** – Before lifting move obstructions and clear pathways so adequate space is available.
- 5) **Coordination** - You must constantly coordinate your movements with those of the other team members and make sure that you communicate with them, coordinate lifts by counting down and synchronizing the lift. Use smooth planned movements and do not jerk.
- 6) **Communicate Moves in Advance** - Also tell the patient what you will be doing ahead of time. A startled patient may reach out and grab something and cause a loss of balance.
- 7) **Secure the Patient** - If you must carry a loaded backboard or stretcher up or down stairs or other inclines, be sure that the patient and or equipment is tightly secured to the device to prevent sliding. If possible, have the patient hold something with their hands (excess straps or bandages). This has proven to lessen the likelihood of them reaching out and grabbing something while being carried.
- 8) **Know Your Equipment** - Know the weight limitations of the equipment you are using. Know what to do if the patient exceeds the weight limitations of the equipment. Practice on seldom used devices to stay proficient.
- 9) **Distance and Terrain Matter** - Minimize the distance needed to carry a patient. It is always best to move a patient on a device that can be rolled.
- 10) **Consider alternatives** - Other devices that are used to lift and carry patients include portable stretchers, flexible stretchers, backboards, basket stretchers (Stokes litters), scoop stretchers, and stair chairs.
- 11) **Know Your Personal Limits** - You should know how much you can comfortably and safely lift and you should not attempt to lift more than this amount. You should try to use four rescuers whenever resources and space allows.
- 12) **Consider Backup if Needed** - Consider the weight of the patient together with the weight of the stretcher and other equipment being carried to determine if additional help is needed.
- 13) **Technical Skills Training and Practice** - You will learn the technical skills of patient packaging and handling through practice and training. You must practice each technique with your team often so that you are able to perform the move quickly, safely, and efficiently.

Sources: [CDC](#), [NIOSH](#), [FDA](#), and [VAVRS](#)

