

TAKE 5

Five Minute Safety Talks



Safe Shoveling

Shovels are used to dig as well as move loose, granular materials, such as fertilizer and grain, from one place to another. Repetitive shoveling can result in injuries to the back and shoulders. It's important for workers to select the appropriate shovel for the job and use the right technique. When selecting a shovel, consider the shovel's:

- Handle type.
- Blade size.
- Shape.
- Weight.

Reducing the weight of the shovel increases efficiency and places less stress on the body. Longer shovel shafts (up to chest height) limit stress on the lower back by reducing the amount of bending required. Shorter shovels, such as scoop shovels, result in better stability when transferring the load. The shovel's shaft should be strong and light. Fiberglass shafts are often lighter and stronger than traditional wood shafts.

Selecting the right shovel blade size and shape will depend on the density or weight and the stability of the materials being shoveled. The less dense the material the larger the blade (shovel head) size. Consider using:

- Triangular or round blades with long handles for sand and soil.
- Square blades with short handles for coarse grain materials such as gravel, grain, and dry fertilizer.
- Smaller blades to minimize the weight of material when lifting.
- Blades with a rolled step on the top for digging in hard soil. This allows you to apply foot pressure to push the blade into the material or earth reducing strain on the upper body and lower back.

When shoveling remember these best practices:

- Always contact your local utility provider before digging to determine the location of utilities.
- Wear proper PPE to include safety footwear, gloves, and long pants.
- Allow for a safe distance between you and your coworkers.
- Keep the feet wide apart and place the front foot close to the shovel.
- Place your weight on your front foot and use your leg to push the shovel.
- Shift your weight to the rear foot and keep the load close to the body.
- Take a step toward the direction of the throw. Avoid Twisting Motions.



Reference: <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/shovel.html>

Remember, safety doesn't have to be difficult, simple steps, such as avoiding twisting motions while shoveling, can prevent injury!

*To learn more about our online training, contact us
at 844-8SAFETY or info@safetymadesimple.com.*

Date Presented: _____

Name of Presenter: _____

Acknowledgement:

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Group Discussion Notes/Comments:

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