

NOAA FISHERIES

National Observer Program

National Observer Program Advisory Team's Safety Advisory Committee

The Safety Advisory Committee (SAC) advises the National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT) on matters of observer safety, health, and welfare. It works to promote a safer and healthier environment for observers to work in and is responsible for developing and recommending the requirements necessary to fulfill NOPAT's national safety standards, including:

- Spearheading and reviewing proposals on observer safety initiatives, along with monitoring and advising on any safety policies and programs which may affect NOAA Fisheries observers.
- Addressing specific safety issues through seminars, workshops, forums, and panel discussions.
- Developing training classes and standards for Observer Programs' safety trainers.
- Creating and maintaining mechanisms to enforce safety-related policies for Observer Programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/fishery-observers



Observer Safety: Proper Lifting Techniques

Safety First for Successful Monitoring

We depend on observers and at-sea monitors—professionally trained biological technicians who gather crucial information about what species are caught and discarded by U.S. commercial fishing vessels—to be our eyes and ears on the water. The work observers do is critical to effective fisheries management, and their safety on the job is of utmost importance. Navigating the marine environment can be challenging. Taking care to put safety first at every step ensures those challenges are met with success.

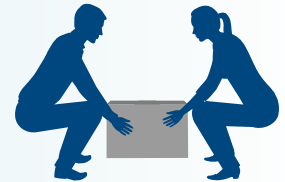
The Challenge: Moving and Lifting Heavy Objects

Whether it's a net filled with fish, heavy equipment on a vessel, or simply a box at the office, heavy objects must be handled carefully and deliberately to avoid injury.

The Solution: Proper Lifting Techniques

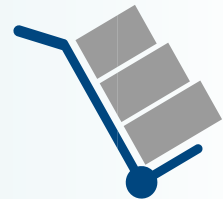
1. Plan Ahead:

- Awkward or heavy loads often require two people.
- Ask for assistance if needed.
- Use ergonomic equipment if necessary, like a dolly or a cart.



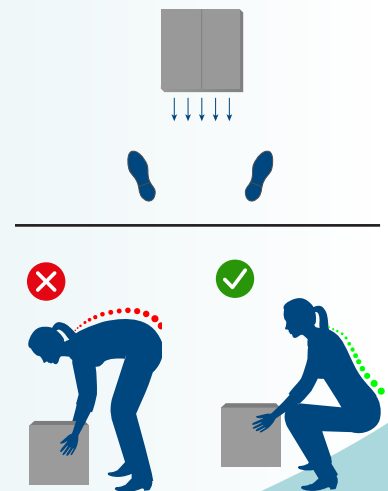
2. Prepare to Lift:

- Warm up with back rotations and hamstring stretches.
- Be aware of the object's weight.
- Check your work area; watch for obstacles or slick surfaces.
- Clear a pathway.



3. Use the Right Techniques:

- Get close to the object.
- Take a wide stance for balance and lower into a squat.
- Don't bend to lift from your waist or back.
- Slide the object toward you.
- Make sure to get a firm, stable grip on the item or object.
- Tighten your core muscles, keep a straight back, and bear the weight in your legs.
- Hold the object close to your body and lift slowly by extending your legs.
- Don't twist your back; pivot the feet to shift direction.



Of course, the safest lifting is no lifting. If possible, store items to be moved or carried at waist level, so that you don't have to bend to pick them up.