



MANUAL LIFTING:

**KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS,
BEND YOUR KNEES,
KEEP YOUR BACK STRAIGHT,
CARRY LOAD CLOSE TO BODY**

MANUAL HANDLING OF LOADS INCLUDES MOVING ITEMS BY LIFTING, LOWERING, CARRYING, PUSHING, OR PULLING.

LOSS PREVENTION TEAM, BRITANNIA P&I

A common mistake made by seafarers is lifting a load by using back muscles instead of using the power of the arm and leg muscles. Sometimes, this can cause serious implications or injuries, especially when dealing with the motion of the sea. If the vessel is rolling or pitching, it is important to secure the load first and then postpone the task until the weather improves.

Always consider using lifting equipment as the preferred choice for handling loads. If equipment is not an option and you have to resort to manual lifting, then always consider the weight of the load, the distance you are carrying it, the storage height (if above shoulder level), and any twisting, bending, stretching, or other awkward posture you may adopt when carrying out the task.

ADVICE TO SEAFARERS¹

Always make full and proper use of any system of work provided by the company.

When lifting, you should:

- Use any mechanical aids provided
- Follow appropriate systems of work laid down for your health and safety
- Take sensible precautions to ensure that you are aware of any risk of injury from a load before picking it up
- Cooperate on all health and safety matters
- Inform your line manager if you identify hazardous handling activities
- Plan the lift – where will you put the load?
- Consider whether you need any help. Some loads require two or more people to lift safely. Are appropriate handling aids available? For a long lift, such as deck to shoulder height, consider resting the load midway to change grip
- Assess the load to be lifted, taking account of any information provided
- Look for sharp edges, protruding nails or splinters, surfaces that are greasy or otherwise difficult to grip, and for any other features that may prove awkward or dangerous; for example, sacks of ship's stores may be difficult to get off the deck
- Ensure that the deck or area over which the load is to be moved is free from obstructions, especially in narrow accesses, and is not slippery
- Check the final stowage location to ensure that it is clear and suitable for the load.

¹ MARITIME & COASTGUARD AGENCY, CODE OF SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR MERCHANT SEAFARERS (COSWP), 2025 EDITION.