

Safety Principles - Laundry Area

Laundry activities can be performed safely when general safety principles are applied throughout the day. Some tasks may carry greater risks for injury if specific procedures or instructions are not followed. Safe work procedures separate from these principles have been developed for these tasks.

General laundry safety principles would include:

- ✓ Protect your body from chemical and biohazards by wearing appropriate gloves, masks and aprons when working with soiled items or chemicals.
- ✓ Always have a sharps container available for safe disposal of sharps found in bags or carts. Use puncture resistant gloves when there may be a risk of sharps.
- ✓ Try to alternate hands, alternate tasks or items to reduce repetition of the same body motion for prolonged periods (e.g. alternate items when folding-switch between linens & towels).
- ✓ Sorting & folding table heights should be 5-15 cm below the elbows. If the table cannot be adjusted, a platform for the table or floor could be used.
- ✓ Report any cart or bin concerns (stiff wheels, moving difficulties, etc.) to your supervisor.
- ✓ Avoid overstuffing laundry bags. Older larger bags can be modified by sewing up 1/3 from the bottom to ensure bags are not heavy.
- ✓ Wear safety, non slip appropriate footwear, (e.g. No Crocs)
- ✓ Anti-fatigue matting provides a softer surface for prolonged standing.
- ✓ Clean up any spills immediately to reduce the chance for slips. Mark wet floors with a caution sign. Refer to MSDS sheets and WHMIS protocols for cleaning spills, or when transporting, disposing, or refilling chemical containers. MSDS sheets are located at _____.
- ✓ Spring loaded platforms or back saver inserts should be placed inside carts. They reduce bending when removing laundry from carts.
- ✓ Respect your body and reduce sprains and strains by:
 - Work in an upright, straight posture. Try to avoid slouching, twisting and over-reaching.
 - Raise and place one foot onto a foot stool to reduce stress on your back when sorting or folding laundry at a table.
 - Use both hands when lifting filled laundry bags. If this is not possible use one arm to support your body by holding onto the bin while the other lifts the bag.
 - To lift or carry loads, use a wide stance to improve stability, try to keep your back upright and straight and use your feet to turn instead of twisting.
 - Bend your knees and use your legs to lift rather than only your arms
- ✓ Keep your work area clean and free from clutter. Put away equipment, tools, containers, carts, etc into their appropriate place as soon as you are finished using them.
- ✓ Do not store any flammable or combustibles by the dryers or other hot surfaces.
- ✓ Never climb into confined equipment.
- ✓ Report any additional safety concerns to your Supervisor.