

Team Safety Talks: Lowering from Overhead

Company Name _____ Job Name _____ Date _____

We talk a great deal about the proper way to lift things up. But we don't say enough about lifting them down, that is, lowering them from overhead. This can be dangerous. Recently a worker was tearing down a machine. He had to remove a flywheel from a shoulder-high shaft. The wheel didn't look heavy to him, but when it came free, it was more than he could handle. He fell to the floor with the flywheel on top of him and was seriously injured.

A COMMON OCCURRENCE

Getting into trouble when lowering heavy items is a common occurrence. You may have experienced trouble yourself. Perhaps you had to get a box of hardware from a high shelf. You had the box over your head and suddenly realized you couldn't handle it. It was coming down on top of you. You were afraid to hang onto it, afraid to let go. The box hit you as it slid from your grasp. The contents scattered all over the floor.

HOW TO APPROACH OVERHEAD LOADS

- **SIZE UP THE LOAD** – If it looks too heavy for you to have lifted it to where it is, it's probably too heavy for you to take down. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Once you get it loose, it's all yours. And if you can't handle it, it's too late.
- **ASK YOURSELF: HOW DID IT GET UP THERE?** Was it put there by lift truck? By two men? By a real big guy, Atlas maybe? The way it got up there is probably the best way to get it down.

HOW TO LOWER A LOAD YOU CAN HANDLE

When you're lowering something you can handle, set it down the same way you would lift it up. Keep knees bent and back straight. If you have to place it to one side or the other, don't twist your body. Move your feet instead.

WHAT GOES UP WILL COME DOWN – FASTER

If you're lifting something up, you can always stop if you find it's too heavy. But when lowering a load from overhead, you've already passed the point of no return the moment it breaks free.

Safety Recommendations: _____

Job Specific Topics: _____

S.D.S Reviewed: _____

Attended By: _____

