

What is a Hand Truck?

A **hand truck** is an L-shaped handcart with handles at one end, 2 large wheels at the base, and a ledge or plate to set objects on when the handcart is upright. Some hand trucks may have 2 smaller additional fixed or retractable casters to help support loads. The L-shaped design of a hand truck allows it to slide under the item to be moved, eliminating the need to raise the item manually, helping to prevent musculoskeletal injuries. Fridge carts are examples of commonly used hand trucks.



What are the most common hazards?

- Fingers and hands being caught in, on, or between the cart and other objects
- Toes, feet and lower legs being bumped, crushed or run over by the cart
- Possibility of a slip causing the cart and the heavy object to fall on the operator
- Possibility of a trip leading you to operator falling on the bulky object
- Strain injuries mainly for the lower back, shoulder, arm muscles and joints



How to Use a Hand Truck Safely

- Before use, inspect the hand truck for any and confirm it is in good working condition
- Refer to the operating manual for instructions on proper operation.
- Consider the weight of the objects and do not load objects heavier than you can handle
- Maintain a low centre of gravity by placing heavier things on the bottom, and do not exceed the maximum weight capacity of the hand truck
- Maintain a low load height to allow for visibility while moving and consider using strapping to secure items
- Keep hands and feet clear of the wheels, pinch points, ledge and other surrounding objects when operating cart to prevent injuries to limbs
- Do not ride on a cart made for a walking operator and never carry passengers along with the load
- Always maintain a clear line of vision in the direction you are moving and avoid obstacles.
- Once the hand truck's ledge has been slid under the object, the cart must be gradually tilted backwards to let the object rest on the ledge and frame until the weight is uniformly balanced over the wheels.
- Wear the appropriate PPE when operating a hand truck (e.g., safety footwear)



Transporting Loads Using a Hand Truck



Factors to consider when selecting a hand truck

- **Ledge Size** – The ledge is the base of a hand truck on which objects are stacked for transport. The ledge size will determine the size of the objects supported by the hand truck. A small ledge will be enough for transporting small objects but will not support large items.
- **Frame Height** – Objects may be stacked on the ledge of a hand truck to move multiple items but must never be placed higher than the frame. When stacked above the frame, objects may tumble and obstruct vision.
- **Load Capacity** - The load capacity is the maximum amount of weight that a hand truck can safely support and is noted on the hand truck frame by the manufacturer. Hand trucks typically have a load capacity of 100 – 1000 lbs. Refer to the load capacity when choosing a hand truck to confirm it will support the expected load for the task.
- **Wheel Type** - Pneumatic tires offer great shock absorption for gravel or other uneven surfaces. Microcellular tires will never go flat making them good for challenging surfaces. Mold-on rubber is the lightest wheel type, yet it's durable and rolls well over paved surfaces. Select a hand truck with a suitable wheel type based on the type of surface it will be used on.
- **Cart Stability** – A higher number of wheels improves the stability of a cart since there are more wheels to bear the load and a wider base.



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Safe Use of Hand Trucks – Path of Transport

Aisle Conditions

- ❖ Keep aisles clear of clutter and check that the path of transport is clear and free of unnecessary objects
- ❖ Aisles should be wide enough to allow the cart to move freely through the pathway, without hitting the walls or any side obstacles
- ❖ Corners should accommodate the turning radius of the moving cart without stopping and starting

Floor Conditions

- ❖ Check that floors along path of transport are in good condition allowing for easy movement
- ❖ Check that the floors along the path of transport are clean, free of debris, dirt, dust, liquids, or spills
- ❖ Check that there are no stray cables on the floor that could cause a tripping hazard or block the wheels

Ramps

- ❖ Consider using a different cart or moving tool if there are several ramps along the path of transport
- ❖ Always stay behind the hand truck when operating
- ❖ When going down a ramp, descend slowly and ask for assistance controlling the cart if necessary
- ❖ When going up a ramp (large one) make sure your back is facing the ramp



Reminders

- Maintain proper body alignment for the type of cart and load being carried
- Use safe lifting techniques when manoeuvring heavy loads
- Operators should move at a typical walking pace when moving loads
- Note open edges near loading docks when moving loads

Transporting Loads Using a Hand Truck

Use this page to list any specific points, reminders or highlights noted during the training related to the tasks involved (if applicable).

Date: _____

Training given by: _____

Operational Reminders:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Safety Reminders:

- e.g., when moving loads from a truck bed to a tailgate or other platform, always push the load, never pull
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

