Safe Lifting Techniques

The Morton Arboretum | ARBORVERSITY Horticulture Training Program

Course Description

Proper lifting and material handling are essential skills for horticulture professionals, helping to prevent injuries and reduce strain during everyday work. This course introduces practical principles for lifting and moving materials safely, including body mechanics, task assessment, preparation, and teamwork.

Learners will build a foundation for deciding how to approach a lifting task, when to ask for help or use another method, and how to reduce risk during routine, repetitive, or awkward material-handling tasks. The course emphasizes practical habits that support both immediate safety and long-term physical health.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, you will be able to:

1. Assess a lifting or material-handling task before beginning, considering factors like the load's weight, size, shape, stability, and frequency of handling, as well as the surrounding work conditions.
2. Choose the safest approach for moving a load, including determining when to lift manually, ask for assistance, use a team lift, use an available mechanical aid, or choose another method.
3. Use safe body mechanics and positioning when lifting, carrying, and lowering materials commonly encountered in horticulture and landscape work.
4. Recognize and correct common lifting practices that increase the risk of injury, including twisting, reaching, poor positioning, rushing, and attempting to manage an awkward or unstable load.
5. Adjust work practices to reduce strain during repetitive, frequent, or awkward material-handling tasks, including recognizing the effects of fatigue and cumulative physical stress.
6. Work safely with others during lifting and material-handling tasks, including coordinating team lifts, communicating clearly, and speaking up when a task cannot be completed safely.