

Shelf Weight Capacity

The Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requires materials to be moved in a way that will not cause injury. This applies to any materials moved by hand or equipment. Materials stored on shelves, racks or cupboards have requirements to prevent them from tipping and falling over. These are *Regulation 851, section 45 and 46* of the OHSA.

In some stores, the top of the shelves are used to store product. Unfortunately, this creates a problem when new items enter the workplace. The busy times of the year, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, see larger orders enter the store that require additional storage space. The practice of overhead storing is not always safe and on occasion can cause injury to workers.

Shelf weight capacity can be obtained from the shelving manufacturer. Your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) can obtain this information from the employer for your individual store.



Example of weight capacity:

- A flat shelf 36" - 48" wide can hold 600 – 1200 pounds of product. A declined shelf has a lower capacity.
- Normally 4-5 shelves are used in a 3-4 foot set.
- Product stored on top shelves should not exceed two-items high or 24" and be secured against tipping or falling.
- Consideration needs to be given to the type of product stored on the overheads. Take caution when storing heavy products, chemicals or glass on top of the shelves.



Don't forget to ask: how is the product placed on the overhead? How it is removed? Due to the height of most shelves, workers would need to lift the product over their shoulders, which is an ergonomic risk. Proper staircases need to be used to provide the worker the opportunity to safely reach the needed height, without straining.

Often, products stored overhead are in open or broken cases. Loose items that are too close to the edge can be dangerous if they fall from this height. This hazard should be part of the workplace monthly inspection.

OHSA that applies:

9. (18) *It is the function of a committee and it has power to,*
(d) *obtain information from the constructor or employer respecting,*
(i) *the identification of potential or existing hazards of materials, processes or equipment, and*
(ii) *health and safety experience and work practices and standards in similar or other industries of which the constructor or employer has knowledge;*

25. 2(h) *take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker;*

25. 2(e) *afford assistance and co-operation to a committee and a health and safety representative in the carrying out by the committee and the health and safety representative of any of their functions;*

45. *Material, articles or things,*
(a) *required to be lifted, carried or moved, shall be lifted, carried or moved in such a way and with such precautions and safeguards, including protective clothing, guards or other precautions as will ensure that the lifting, carrying or moving of the material, articles or things does not endanger the safety of any worker;*
(b) *shall be transported, placed or stored so that the material, articles or things,*
(i) *will not tip, collapse or fall, and*
(ii) *can be removed or withdrawn without endangering the safety of any worker; and*
(c) *to be removed from a storage area, pile or rack, shall be removed in a manner that will not endanger the safety of any worker.*

46. *Machinery, equipment or material that may tip or fall and endanger any worker shall be secured against tipping or falling.*

Not all hazards present in your workplace may be listed here.

Please check the
Occupational Health & Safety Act and
applicable regulations
for your workplace.



OHSA R.S.O. 1990, C.0.1.

Sections that apply:

Section 9(18)(i)(ii)

Section 25.2(h)

Section 25 2(e)

R.R.O. 1990 851

Industrial Reg. that apply:

• ***Section 45 (a)(b)(c)***

• ***Section 46.***

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