

*Please report all accidents and near misses. Things happen and it is important to learn from others. Environmental Health and Safety and your colleagues appreciate hearing about incidents, reviewing their causes and learning from them.*

## WATCH THAT TRASH

Numerous resources are required to support research and education. Trash removal is often an overlooked operation. In addition to specific requirements for specific wastes such as biohazard, chemical and sharps, the size and weight of general trash must be considered.

### What Happened?

Approximately 30 percent of reported injuries at Yale are a result of overexertion. Contributing factors for overexertion injuries often include overfilled trash containers/bags and poor access.

### What Went Right?

Personnel reported incidents including near misses. Unsafe acts and unsafe conditions often occur repeatedly without an injury, a condition known as a near-miss incident.

### What Should Have Been Done Differently?

The size and weight of trash containers and bags need to be managed. This task is a shared responsibility between those generating the trash and those removing it.

### What Corrective Actions Have Been Taken?

Those generating trash which requires manual lifting by Custodial Service employees will be instructed to consider the size, weight and placement of trash. This document will be used as a communication resource. In addition, evaluations will be performed for frequent manual lifting tasks to determine if engineering controls are available and feasible.

### How Can Incidents Like This Be Prevented?

#### Do:

- Divide heavy loads by utilizing multiple bags. Remember that individual bags are often lifted out of trash containers and hoppers to be placed into dumpsters and compactors.
- Identify heavy trash bags and boxes. As a service provider, Custodial Service employees aim to provide prompt service. It is extremely helpful to the employee to be able to identify an item as unusually heavy before attempting to lift it.
- Break down boxes and place them in an appropriate area.
- Proactively communicate to Custodial Services when an unusual amount of trash is anticipated. This includes quantity, size and weight.

#### Don't:

- Overfill trash containers and hoppers.
- Place trash and boxes in areas which present a tripping hazard or emergency exit/egress obstruction.
- Place sharps such as broken glass and needles directly into trash bags.

### More Information

- **Yale Environmental Health and Safety:** Put Waste in Its Place Poster (<http://bit.ly/2adaB5R>)
- **Yale Environmental Health and Safety:** Disposal of Solid Chemicals in Normal Trash (<http://bit.ly/2a7HzmC>)
- **Ergonomics Plus:** Proper Lifting Techniques (<http://bit.ly/2a7GTh7>)
- **Training:** Manual Material Handling Safety and Ergonomics (<http://bit.ly/2au4P0t>)

