SHARP START

March 3 — Carrying Heavy Equipment Alone

Coworker was attempting to carry in a heavy piece of equipment by themselves.

I told them to hold up, propped the door open, and helped them carry the equipment inside together.

A coworker was attempting to carry a heavy piece of equipment alone instead of asking for help or using proper lifting equipment. Nothing had failed yet. No one was hurt. But the risk was already in motion.

> If it's awkward, it's risky.
> If it's heavy, it's not a solo job.
> Asking for help is strength, not weakness.

Heavy loads don't give second chances. When weight shifts unexpectedly, grip fails, or footing slips, the load goes wherever gravity takes it. That can mean crushed fingers, strained backs, torn shoulders, or equipment dropped onto feet.

This wasn't a knowledge issue. Everyone knows heavy objects are hard to handle alone. It was a decision issue the moment where pride, urgency, or convenience overrides good judgment.

Most strains and crush injuries don't happen because the task was impossible. They happen because someone decided to handle it alone.

Hazards

- Back strain or muscle tear
- Dropped load on foot or leg
- Crushed fingers or hands
- Loss of balance leading to fall
- Equipment damage
- Delayed long-term injury (herniated disc. chronic pain)

Stats

- Overexertion and bodily reaction injuries account for a large percentage of workplace injuries annually.
- Strains and sprains are among the most common lost-time injuries.
- Manual material handling is a leading contributor to back injuries.
- Many lifting injuries occur during routine tasks, not unusual events.

Humans at Work

Sometimes the risk isn't a lack of knowledge but instead it's confidence. Strong, capable workers are used to handling tough tasks. That strength can turn into **overconfidence**, and overconfidence can turn into isolation. **Pride** tells us, "I've got it." Experience tells us, "I've done this before." But heavy loads don't care how strong you are or how many times you've lifted something successfully. The moment we decide to handle it alone to prove we can, we increase the chance that gravity proves we can't.

Pause and Think

- Do you know the actual weight of the equipment?
- Do you have proper lifting tools available?
- Would a second set of hands reduce the risk?