



Cart Safety

Carts come in many sizes and styles and are used by workers in many industries. While carts and the reasons we use them vary, they have some common hazards and safety issues to consider.

Hazards associated with carts include using the wrong type for the job or the wrong size of cart for the worker (ergonomics). They can be hazardous when used in congested work areas and in areas of poor housekeeping. They can cause injury to the handler who's had inadequate training. And, carts can cause the handler injury if the cart has not been properly maintained. All of these hazards require extra effort by the handler that may cause accidents that can result in sprains and strains, crush injuries, and fractures.

The Right Cart

- Make sure that the cart has the design and capacity for the job tasks. Some carts have open sides or spring loaded bottoms that assist the handler with loading and unloading. Carts should have enough room to store necessary supplies and equipment. Use carts for the intended purpose; reckless horseplay can lead to injuries. Unless the cart was designed to carry people, don't allow passengers.
- The floor or ground surface determines the best wheel type for the cart. Generally, larger and harder wheels are easier and require less force to push. Steel wheels are the easiest, followed by hard rubber, and plastic; soft rubber wheels are the hardest to push. For tight spaces and crowded work conditions, four swivel wheels or casters add maneuverability. For pushing long distances, two swivel wheels and two straight wheels ease movement.
- Carts need a wheel-locking mechanism to park them. Take care where you park your cart; don't block walkways, exits or doorways. A braking system adds additional control on slopes and ramps.
- Handles should be located at the rear of the cart and at the proper height for pushing. It is easier on your back to push than to pull. Lean in the direction in which you are going and use your arms and legs (not your back) for leverage. If you must pull a cart, keep the cart at your side to avoid twisting your back.

Don't overload the cart; you won't see where you are going and it may overload the wheels. Don't attempt to carry extra items while you are pushing the cart; when pushing, keep both hands on the cart handle. Inspect your cart each time you use it; it should be properly functioning and in good repair. Wheel bearings require periodic inspections and maintenance and damaged wheels should be replaced.



This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

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