

Overview

This section is a practical guide to the manual lifting and handling of British Gypsum products both safely and successfully. The pictures and advice are designed to help you get the best results from our products. Please use them alongside your project's own design criteria and your usual good practice and site safety precautions.

Introduction

British Gypsum recognises the increasing importance of Health and Safety at work. We've been working with Pristine Condition, experts in lifting and handling, to develop a series of 'Safe Systems of Work' for manual handling and lifting of our products.

The simple guidance in this section suggests appropriate methods for handling British Gypsum products, including Gyproc plasterboards, Thistle plasters, Gypframe metal sections, British Gypsum specialist boards and British Gypsum ceiling products.

More detailed information is available on the Product Data Sheets, available to download from www.british-gypsum.com

Information is also included on specialist handling equipment, as featured within the Gyproc Tools Catalogue, available to download from www.artextltd.com/products/professional_tools_products

For more detailed information, please refer to the EUROGYPSUM report on manual handling, available to download from www.eurogypsum.org

Legislation and regulations

The details and guidance contained in this book and associated literature produced by British Gypsum meet relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and standards current at the date of publication of this document. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that these remain current prior to use.

Customers are also reminded that under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the following subsequent regulations - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations - that employers are under a duty to ensure that all risks associated with the use of equipment are properly assessed, that employees are informed of such and, where applicable, are instructed, trained and supervised in the proper use of such work equipment and protective equipment. The extent of instruction, training and supervision required will depend on the employees existing competence necessary to use the work equipment with due regard for Health and Safety.

Health and Safety

The products and systems included in this document have been developed for use in domestic, commercial and industrial buildings. Simple guidance on how to install these products and systems is given at the start of each relevant section. More detailed and practical installation guidance is given in the British Gypsum **SITE BOOK**, available to download from www.british-gypsum.com

It is important to follow good site practice at all times and to ensure that appropriate safety precautions are taken, including the use of appropriate personal protection equipment and clothing when working with British Gypsum products.

The following general notes on 'Safe Systems of Work' are offered for guidance:

Personal protection equipment (PPE)

- Always wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) as directed on site.
- Hard hat and safety shoes are required at all times.
- Keep hands warm and dry - dressing warmly in cold weather helps stay warm. Wear gloves and change them if they get wet.
- Always wear gloves when handling, carrying, cutting or fixing metal.
- Wear safety glasses and dust mask when handling or mixing plaster ingredients and additives, applying ingredients and additives or applying plaster, finishing ceilings or sanding.
- Wear safety glasses when snipping metal pieces, such as corner beads, trims, and wire mesh.
- Do not continue to work if safety glasses become fogged due to condensation. Stop work and clean the glasses until the lenses are clear and de-fogged.

Installation

- British Gypsum drylining systems are not designed to support body weight. Fixers must work from an independent support system.
- When cutting boards, power and hand tools should be used with care and in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations. Appropriate PPE should be used.
- Keep sanding and other dust generation to a minimum. Maintain adequate ventilation and / or wear suitable protection.
- Power tools should only be used by people who have been instructed and trained to use them safely.

Storage

- Store plasterboard, plasterboard accessories, metal sections and plasters in dry conditions.
- Protect primers and ready-mixed materials from freezing conditions.
- Practice good housekeeping and stock rotation.
- Don't attempt to separate boards using the forks of a fork-lift truck.
- Don't use hoists or cranes without safety retaining ropes / slings.
- When using powdered products, mix with water in well ventilated conditions. Avoid contact with eyes and skin. In the event of contact with the eyes, irrigate with plenty of clean water immediately, and seek first aid.
- When handling insulation or cutting board products containing glass-fibre, wear suitable protection including appropriate face mask and gloves. Wear goggles when working overhead.

Manual lifting and handling

- Wherever possible, place one foot in front of the other to produce a good base and reduce the pressure on the body.
- Assess the load by placing your hand on it and moving it.
- Only handle what you feel you can manage safely and comfortably.
- Initiate movements with your legs, unlocking the knees and driving with the legs to start the lift.
- Keep the load as close, or get as close as possible to the load, when lifting or handling.
- Turn instead of twisting and move your feet.
- Let your back find its natural curvature.
- Never lose control of the load.

Work methods

- Rest for 15 seconds, many times throughout the day. Some studies have shown that micro pauses (short breaks) reduce stress and can lead to an increase in productivity¹.
- Rotate jobs; if one part of the job requires a lot of overhead work, switch for a while to an activity that uses different work motions.

¹ Musculoskeletal problems in bricklayers, carpenters and plasterers: literature review and results of site visits, Health and Safety Laboratory, Sheffield: Health and Safety Executive, 2001.

Handling and storage

British Gypsum fully accepts its responsibilities as a supplier of building materials and systems as required by Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. However, in designing and installing systems incorporating British Gypsum products, full consideration must be taken of the legal requirements of:

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations.
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).

Your attention is brought to the following publications which give approved guidance:

- Manual Handling Guidance on Regulations ISBN 0 71762823X.
- Managing Health and Safety in Construction. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations ISBN 9 780717662234.
- Designing for Health and Safety in Construction ISBN 0 717608077.

Loading and unloading pallets

PPE: Hard hat, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Always place one foot forward by operating from the corner of the pallet or placing one foot on the pallet, taking care to ensure that the pallet does not tip in the process.
- Unlock the knees for low level work.
- Take a firm grip of the load with both hands.
- Lift using the legs to start the movement.
- Always keep the load close when carrying.
- **DO NOT LIFT WITH FEET IN LINE OR WITH LOAD IN FRONT OF THE FRONT FOOT.**



Mixing of bagged products

PPE: Mask, eye protection, hard hat, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

Emptying bags into a mixer

- Always place one foot down by the side of the mixing container.
- Unlock the knees if necessary.
- **DO NOT EMPTY BAGS WITH FEET IN LINE.**

When mixing

- Keep the foot to the side of the mixing container.
- Unlock the knees if necessary.
- Maintain a balanced position.
- **DO NOT WORK WITH FEET IN LINE.**



Picking from mid level

PPE: Hard hat, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Place one foot forward.
- Take a firm grip of the load.
- Pull the load to a point of pivot (using the legs if necessary).
- Pivot against the stack.
- Keep the load close.
- **DO NOT TWIST.**
- **DO NOT PICK WITH FEET IN LINE.**



Handling buckets

PPE: Hard hat, gloves, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Always place one foot alongside the bucket before lifting, or pivot the bucket towards you before lifting.
- Take a firm grip with both hands.
- If heavy, you may need to tilt and take a grip of the base and the top of the bucket.
- Start the lift with the legs.
- Unlock the knees for low level work.
- Always turn by moving the feet.
- If taking two buckets, always carry in a balanced manner.
- Only handle what you can manage.
- **DO NOT CARRY HEAVY OBJECTS ON ONE SIDE.**
- **DO NOT TWIST.**



Handling lengths of metal

PPE: Gloves, hard hat, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Always approach the lengths of metal from one end.
 - Place one foot forward.
 - Unlock the knees for low level work.
 - Take a firm grip.
 - Lift using the legs to start the movement.
 - **DO NOT PICK FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE STACK.**
- EITHER**
- Work your way to the middle.
 - Pivot the stack and carry in a balanced manner.
- OR**
- Place over the shoulder.
 - Work your way to the middle (point of balance).
 - Unlock the knees to rest the stack against the shoulder.
 - Allow the stack to pivot against the shoulder as you stand up.
 - Only carry over the shoulder if you can remain upright.
 - Be aware of your surroundings when carrying lengths of metal in this way.
 - **DO NOT LEAN.**



If removing from racks

PPE: Gloves, hard hat and safety shoes required.

- Place one foot forward.
- Drive with the legs to bring the load to one end.
- Carry in a balanced manner.
- Always communicate during the lifts and carrying.

Handling boards

PPE: Hard hat, gloves, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

One person operation

- Pull the board in towards yourself.
- Unlock the knees for low level work.
- Lift by using the legs.
- Try using handles for carrying plasterboard.
- Improve your grip and help to make the lift less awkward.
- Tools are available to reduce the time you spend in overhead work and holding, to help hold boards in place for fixing.
- Use team lifting where appropriate.
- Carry the board in a balanced manner (for large boards, you can support the board on the top of the chest/ shoulder).
- Only lift what you feel you can manage.
- If necessary, seek assistance.
- When stacking boards, position boards sideways slightly in front of you, so you do not have to reach over your head or twist your body to lift them.
- Position panels to lean flat against a wall and do not wobble or slide.
- Push and slide panels along their edge or get assistance from a co-worker.

Two person operation

- Operate from the corners of the stack.
- Unlock the knees for low level work.
- Lift board together to vertical position.
- Only lift what you feel you can manage.
- Carry in a balanced manner across the body.
- If walking backwards, ensure it is over the shortest possible distance and clear the route beforehand.
- **DO NOT CARRY HEAVY OBJECTS ON ONE SIDE.**

Carrying board up / down stairs

PPE: Hard hat, gloves, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Whether going up or down stairs, place one foot forward then bring both feet together on each step.
- Keep the boards in a balanced manner.
- Place both feet on each step before moving off to improve control and balance throughout the lift.
- Work together and in time.
- Stop wherever necessary (if steps are in poor order, or have a deeper drop, you may need to place the load down first).
- Only lift what you feel you can manage.



Fixing walls

PPE: Eye protection, gloves, hard hat, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Operate in a balanced manner.
- Always keep one foot forward.
- Unlock the knees for low level work.
- Always work in front of the body.
- Use appropriate platforms where necessary.
- **DO NOT OVER-REACH OR STRETCH TO THE SIDES OR ABOVE THE HEAD.**



Lifting plasterboards into place (including ceilings) - two person operation

PPE: Eye protection, hard hat, gloves, hi-vis and safety shoes required.

- Communicate – work together.
- Take a firm grip of the board in both hands.
- Unlock the knees to place board into position.
- Always work in front of the body.



Fixing ceilings

PPE: Eye protection, hard hat and safety shoes required.

- Always work in a balanced position.
- Operate with one foot forward.
- Keep the body upright.
- Always use appropriate platforms where necessary.
- **DO NOT OVER-REACH.**



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