



## SHELVES

are an essential part of storage and organization. On average, seven shelf-related injuries occur every year on campus. Many of these injuries are caused by unsecured units, falling items, moving heavy or awkward objects, and climbing or reaching to access higher objects. Falling hazards and lifting injuries can be avoided by organizing items on the shelf properly and anchoring shelving units to the wall or floor. Pay attention to where you put items on a shelf and keep in mind what would happen to the items on the shelf in the event of an earthquake.

## SHELVING BEST PRACTICES

- Never climb on the shelves or reach overhead! Use a step stool or ladder.
- Install shelving so common items can be reached between average waist and shoulder height
- Store heavier and frequently used items in the “knee to shoulder” range. Place lighter items overhead and seldom used items on low shelves.
- When placing items onto or removing them from shelves, elbows should be no more than 6” from the body in the Green or Yellow Zone. Avoid the Red Zone.
- Anchor shelves to the floor or wall to prevent the unit from falling over in an earthquake.
- Do not overload shelves and make sure items aren’t hanging over the edge.
- Install the right shelf for the right job! A wooden shelf won’t be as effective as a shelf with steel racks for handling wet dishes.

## WHAT TO DO!

- Don’t install shelves yourself! Contact CPM Work Control or your department’s facility manager to ensure shelves are installed properly.
- Let your supervisor know if shelves need repair or if you require a step stool or ladder (don’t reach overhead).
- Report all injuries to your supervisor immediately!



Use a step stool or ladder for out of reach items!



**Green Zone**  
Elbows at the side of the body. Leverage is better and muscles do less work when the load is closer to the body.



**Yellow Zone**  
Elbows move away from body up to 6”. Places more force on the shoulders and upper back.



**Red Zone**  
Elbows move farther out or above the shoulders. More force is now on the low back. Muscles must do much more work than the Green or Yellow Zones.

### Leverage Zones<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SAIF - Safety In Motion®: Leverage zone poster  
[https://www.saif.com/documents/SafetyandHealth/Ergonomics/S1060\\_Post\\_er\\_Leverage\\_Zone.pdf](https://www.saif.com/documents/SafetyandHealth/Ergonomics/S1060_Post_er_Leverage_Zone.pdf)

