# Manual collection: REFUSE

For large, bulk or irregular garbage, it is sometimes necessary to collect items manually. In these instances, there are key areas to consider to stay safe.

*Good handling technique:*

* Always lift items properly by keeping feet approximately shoulder width apart, bending at the knees and keeping the back straight
* Avoid twisting while lifting an object; move only in the direction feet are pointing
* Firmly plant feet prior to lifting
* When lifting and tossing items for long periods, use various techniques to avoid repetitive strain
* If a load shifts while moving, stop and lower the load, readjust, then lift again
* When possible and especially for bulky, large, or awkward items get assistance
* Get a good hold on the object that is not on a sharp edge
* Make sure the weight of the object does not exceed grip strength
* Keep items between hips and shoulders
* When team lifting the item should be held at the same level

*Additional tips to keep in mind:*

* Whenever possible to use special trucks, hoisting equipment, or other lifting aids do so
* Any time ropes, slings, cables etc. are used they should be inspected beforehand
* Wear gloves that have good grip and fit well to assist with lifting
* Be aware of unseen or unmarked sharp objects that may be in the pile
* Be aware of traffic moving around the collection area; use all lights and positioning of the vehicle to stay safe; face traffic whenever possible
* If the truck has a mechanical lift or boom, assess each pickup location for overhead obstructions such as power lines
* If collecting in a busy area it may be necessary to have a traffic control vehicle follow behind to assist
* Wear all appropriate personal protective equipment to protect from dusts, chemicals, biological exposures etc.
* Never lift a load mechanically and leave it unattended

If manual lifting can be avoided, it should be. Any collection that can happen while inside the truck is the best way to keep refuse collection workers safe. When that isn’t possible remember the tips above.