*Safe Work Practices* Carrying Heavy Oval Trays

**Hazards:** Heavy trays loaded with glassware, cutlery, and possibly hot food

**Equipment:** Oval tray, plates with food and covers

**Personal protective equipment:** N/A

**Training required:** On-the-job training — Practice with an empty tray

**Legal requirements:** N/A

# Safe work practices

1. Bring the oval tray into the banquet kitchen and place it on the table.
2. Ensure that the underside of the tray is clean — this may affect your grip.
3. Stack plates on the tray. Consider that the heaviest part of the tray will rest on your shoulder, which is the strongest part of your arm.
4. The maximum number of plates on the tray should be 10. The number of plates you can load on a tray is determined by the following:

* Size of the plates.
* Comfort level — work your way up to carrying larger loads. Pay attention to balance, core strength, and your ability to move.

1. Squat down so your legs are bent, with one knee closer to floor. This knee should be on the side of your body that will bear the most weight.
2. Place your shoulder level with the table but just under the tray. Keeping your abs contracted and your back straight, slide the tray onto your shoulder.
3. Use both hands to support and balance the tray. Keep both wrists in neutral positions by grasping the outside edges of the tray.
4. Carry the tray with your shoulder, arm, and hand. Carry the tray as close to your body as possible, balanced on both your arm and hand.
5. Make sure you are balanced, and proceed toward the exit, calling “corner” left or right.
6. To put the tray down, squat and slide it off your shoulder onto the side stand.

References: *Ergonomic Tips for the Hospitality Industry: Preventing Injuries when Serving Banquets* (WorkSafeBC pamphlet PH45)

*Back Talk: An Owner’s Manual for Backs* (WorkSafeBC publication BK4)