



Manual Handling Policy

General Statement

Statistics show that manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury in the workplace. These injuries often have long-term effects. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and provide guidance on the measures that should be taken to ensure safe lifting and carrying.

The person with the responsibility for implementing the provisions of this policy is

_____.

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

1. Elimination of Hazardous Manual Handling Activities

The organisation will ensure that operations which involve manual handling are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Measures to achieve this include ergonomic design of the workplace and activity, and the provision of automated or mechanical aids such as trolleys, chutes and conveyors.

2. Assessment of Risk

Competent persons will carry out an assessment of the risks of manual handling activities. Identified risks will be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The following factors will be considered during the assessment.

a. The Task

Bending and stooping to lift a load significantly increases the risk of back injury. Items should ideally be lifted from no lower than knee height and no higher than shoulder height. Outside this range, lifting capacity is reduced and the risk of injury is increased.

If items must be lifted from above shoulder height, a stand or suitable means of access should be used. Items which are pushed or pulled should be as close to waist level as possible. Pushing is preferable, particularly where the back can rest against a fixed object to give leverage.

Carrying distances should be minimised, especially if the task is repeated. Repetitive tasks should be avoided where possible. Tasks that involve lifting

and carrying should be designed to allow for sufficient rest breaks to avoid fatigue. Avoid tasks that require twisting the body where possible.

b. The Load

The load should be kept as close as possible to the body's trunk to reduce strain and should not be of such size as to obscure vision. An indication of the load's weight and centre of gravity should be provided.

Unstable loads should be handled with particular caution. The change in centre of gravity is likely to result in overbalancing. Ensure there is a secure handhold, using gloves where necessary to protect against sharp edges or splinters.

c. The Individual

Consideration must be given to age, body weight and physical fitness. Regard must also be given to personal limitation; employees must not attempt to handle loads that are beyond their capabilities. Assistance must be sought when necessary.

Allowances should be made for people with genuine physical or clinical reasons for avoiding lifting. Pregnant women and very recent mothers should not be required to undertake hazardous lifting or carrying tasks.

Sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work is an important factor in reducing the risk of injury. Individuals undertaking lifting or carrying will be given suitable instruction, training and information to undertake the task with minimum risk.

d. The Environment

There must be adequate space to enable the activity to be safely conducted and the transportation route must be free of obstructions. Lighting, heating and weather conditions must be considered. Floors and other working surfaces must be free from slipping and tripping hazards, and adequate ventilation is required, particularly when natural ventilation is lacking.

e. Other Factors

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) may be necessary whilst carrying out manual handling activities. If the use of PPE restricts safe and easy movement, this should be reported. Constant interruptions from other workers must also be avoided, as it can reduce concentration.

Managers' and Supervisors' Duties

Managers or supervisors must ensure that:

- a. manual handling assessments are carried out where relevant and records are kept

- b. safety representatives or the employees directly are consulted about control measures before such measures are implemented
- c. employees are properly supervised
- d. adequate information and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities
- e. any injuries or incidents relating to manual handling are investigated, with remedial action taken
- f. employees adhere to safe systems of work
- g. safety arrangements for manual handling operations are monitored and reviewed
- h. employees undertaking manual handling activities are suitably screened for reasons of health and safety, before doing the work
- i. special arrangements are made for individuals with health conditions which could be adversely affected by manual handling operations.

Employees' Duties

Employees must:

- a. report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may be affected by manual handling activity
- b. comply with instruction and training provided
- c. ensure their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out manual handling activities
- d. use equipment which has been provided
- e. report any problems relating to the activity to a responsible person.

Information and Training

Suitable information and training will be provided to persons required to carry out manual handling activities. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a responsible person. Refresher training will also be given.

Employees will be informed of approximate weights of loads to be handled and objects with an uneven weight distribution.
