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## HS 4

# Manual Handling Policy

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## CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Policy Statement .....	1
<b>Policy Guidance</b>	
3. Key Steps.....	2
4. Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers .....	2
5. Duties of Managers .....	4
6. Duties of Employees .....	5
7. Information and Training .....	5
8. Simple Precautions .....	5
9. Records.....	6
10. Advice .....	6
Appendix A - Checklist .....	7
Appendix B - Factors to be Taken into Consideration and Questions to be Answered When Making an Assessment of Manual Handling Operations .....	8
Appendix C - Rules for Lifting (Good Lifting Procedure) .....	9
Managers Checklist.....	10

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy has been produced in response to the Manual Handling Operations Regulations.
- 1.2 The regulations apply to manual handling operations which may cause injury at work.
- 1.3 Manual handling in this sense means:
  - "any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force".
- 1.4 Competent person in this policy means a person whose abilities should include:
  - an understanding of the Regulations;
  - a knowledge of the handling operations that are to be assessed;
  - an awareness of human (individual) capabilities and limitations;
  - an ability to recognise particular risks;
  - an ability to recommend reasonably practicable solutions;
  - a judgement of what constitutes an acceptable residual risk.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 2.1 Statistics show that manual handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury at the workplace. More than one third of lost time accidents are caused in this way. These injuries very often have long-term effects. This policy is intended to help reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and to provide guidance on the measures that should be taken to ensure safe manual handling at the workplace.
- 2.2 The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

## **POLICY GUIDANCE**

### **3. KEY STEPS**

- 3.1 When manual handling operations are being carried out the following key steps must be considered:
- avoid hazardous manual handling operations where reasonably practicable. Consider whether the load must be moved at all. If it must, whether it can be moved with the aid of mechanical assistance;
  - assess adequately any hazardous operations that cannot be avoided. An ergonomic assessment should look at more than just the weight of the load. You should consider the shape and size of the load; the way the task is carried out (e.g. the handler's posture); the working environment (e.g. is it cramped or hot?); the individual's capability (e.g. is unusual strength required?). Unless the assessment is very simple, a written record of it is needed;
  - reduce the risk of injury from these operations as far as reasonably practicable. A good assessment will not only show whether there is a problem but will also point to where the problem lies. That is the starting point for improvement. For example, if the load is bulky or heavy, it may be possible to use mechanical handling aids or break down the load. If handlers have to adopt an awkward posture, it may be possible to rearrange the task. Additional training may be required.

### **4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECURING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS**

- 4.1 Elimination of hazardous manual handling activities - operations that involve hazardous manual handling must be 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 conveyers.
- 4.2 Assessment of risk - assessment of unavoidable manual handling activities must be carried out by a competent person. Risks which are identified will be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level. The following factors should be considered during the assessment:

- **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 to no higher than shoulder height. Outside this range, lifting capacity is reduced and the risk of injury is increased. Where items are required to 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 near 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 regularly repeated. Repetitive tasks should be avoided wherever possible. Tasks that involve lifting and carrying should be designed in such a way as to allow for sufficient rest breaks to avoid fatigue. Avoid tasks that require twisting the body wherever possible;

- **the load** - the load should be kept as near as possible to the body trunk to reduce strain and should not be of such size as to obscure vision. An indication of the weight of the load and the centre of gravity should be provided where appropriate. Unstable loads should be handled with particular caution. The change in centre of gravity is likely to result in overbalancing. Ensure that there is a secure handhold, using gloves where necessary to protect against sharp edges or splinters;
- **the working environment** - there must be adequate space to enable the activity to be conducted in safety and the transportation route must be free from obstruction. Lighting, heating and weather conditions must be taken into account. Floors and other working surfaces must be in a safe condition, and adequate ventilation is required, particularly where there is no natural ventilation;
- **the individual** - consideration must be given to age, body weight and physical fitness. Regard must be given to personal limitation. Employees must not attempt to handle loads that are beyond their individual capability. Assistance must be sought where this is necessary.

Persons with genuine physical or clinical reasons for avoiding lifting should be made allowance for, as should pregnant women, who should not be required to undertake hazardous manual handling tasks.

Sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work is an important factor in reducing the risk of injury. Individuals undertaking manual handling tasks must be given suitable instruction, training and information to undertake the task with minimum risk.

4.3 **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 be avoided, as this can reduce the concentration of an individual.

4.4 The following Appendices give guidance on manual handling operations:

APPENDIX A Gives a checklist and guidance of the areas to be considered when manual handling operations are carried out;

APPENDIX B Highlights the factors to be considered and questions to be answered when making an assessment;

APPENDIX C Gives guidance on good lifting practice.

## 5. **DUTIES OF MANAGERS**

5.1 Managers must ensure that:

- manual handling assessments are carried out for hazardous operations and appropriate records are kept;
- employees are properly supervised;
- adequate information and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities;
- any injuries or incidents relating to manual handling are investigated, with remedial action taken;
- employees adhere to safe systems of work;
- safety arrangements for manual handling operations are regularly monitored and reviewed;
- employees undertaking manual handling activities are suitably screened for reasons of health and safety, before undertaking the work;
- special arrangements are made, where necessary, for individuals with health conditions which could be adversely affected by manual handling operations.

## **6. DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES**

6.1 Employees must ensure that:

- they report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may be detrimentally affected by the manual handling activity;
- they comply with any instructions;
- their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out manual handling activities;
- they use equipment which has been provided to minimise manual handling activities;
- any problems relating to the activity are reported to a responsible person.

## **7. INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

7.1 Suitable information and training must be provided to employees who are required to carry out manual handling activities. Training requirements need to be identified and reviewed by a responsible person. Refresher training should be provided as necessary.

## **8. SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS**

8.1 Poor lifting and carrying techniques can result in discomfort and increase the risk of injury. In extreme circumstances, these injuries can have permanent effects. These risks can be reduced by adopting the following simple precautions:

- ensure that formalised systems of work which have been designed for the work activity are complied with;
- make full and proper use of aids to lifting and carrying, such as trolleys, chutes and access equipment;
- store heavy items between shoulder and hip height. Where possible only store small, light items above shoulder or below knee height;
- use the legs and knees to bend and lift - do not stoop or bend the back;
- avoid tasks which require stretching or twisting;
- ensure that regular rest breaks are taken where manual handling activities are repetitive or to prevent the onset of fatigue;



- ensure that there are no sharp, hot or cold edges which could cause injury;
- ensure that walkways are free from obstructions;
- make full and proper use of PPE;
- report any problems or concerns associated with manual handling operations to a responsible person without delay.

## **9. RECORDS**

9.1 Where an assessment has identified a significant risk of injury, suitable records must be kept. The records should identify the following:

- location/division;
- activity under assessment;
- description of activity/present system of work;
- previous accident/damage statistics for activity;
- numbers and groups of employees involved;
- groups or individual employees identified as being at higher risk;
- significant risks identified from assessment;
- existence and effectiveness of existing control measures;
- any further controls which are required;
- target date for implementation of controls;
- date for review;
- name of assessor(s);
- date of assessment.

9.2 Records should also be kept of any training given to employees.

9.3 Assessments of low risk activities, which can be very quickly and easily repeated, need not be formally recorded.

## **10. ADVICE**

10.1 Advice on the implementation of this policy can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources, Ty Elai, Williamstown, CF40 1NY, telephone 01443 425531.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CHECKLIST**

- Have assessments of the employee's handling tasks been made?
- Have arrangements been made to monitor accidents and ill health to assess the effectiveness of any improved systems of work?
- Can mechanical assistance be introduced in any of the lifting work?
- Can loads be made smaller, lighter, easier to handle, rough edges smoothed off, or marked to show how or where to hold them?
- Can handling aids such as trolleys, slides, chutes or conveyors be used? Is personal protective equipment necessary?
- Can the workplace be redesigned to reduce bending, twisting, stretching, carrying over distances or frequency of handling? Can jobs be rotated to avoid repetition and constant exertion? Are proper rest pauses provided?
- Can the workplace be made safer by widening gangways, removing obstructions, keeping floors clean and providing proper lighting and temperature controls?
- Has allowance been made for the individual characteristics of the workforce?
- Is instruction and training necessary? If a training programme is introduced, is its effectiveness being monitored?
- Do any jobs require special strength or fitness? If so, has this been evaluated and the employees selected accordingly?

## APPENDIX B

### FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION AND QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED WHEN MAKING AN ASSESSMENT OF MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS

#### FACTORS

1. The Tasks	Do they involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding or manipulating loads at a distance from the trunk?</li> <li>• Unsatisfactory body movements or posture especially:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) twisting the trunk?</li> <li>b) stooping?</li> <li>c) reaching upwards?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Excessive movement of loads, especially:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) excessive lifting distance?</li> <li>b) excessive lowering distance?</li> <li>c) excessive carrying distance?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Excessive pushing or pulling?</li> <li>• Risk of sudden movement?</li> <li>• Frequent physical effort?</li> <li>• Prolonged physical effort?</li> <li>• Insufficient rest periods?</li> <li>• Insufficient recovery periods?</li> <li>• A rate of work imposed by a process?</li> </ul>
2. The Loads	Are they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy?</li> <li>• Bulky or unwieldy?</li> <li>• Difficult to grasp?</li> <li>• Unstable, or with contents likely to shift?</li> <li>• Sharp, hot, or otherwise potentially damaging?</li> </ul>
3. The Working Environment	Are there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space constraints preventing good posture?</li> <li>• Uneven, slippery or unstable floors?</li> <li>• Variations in the level of floors or work surfaces?</li> <li>• Extremes in temperature or humidity?</li> <li>• Conditions causing ventilation problems or gusts of wind?</li> <li>• Poor lighting conditions?</li> </ul>
4. Individual Capability	Does the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require unusual strength, height?</li> <li>• Create a hazard to those who are pregnant or have a health problem?</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

### RULES FOR LIFTING (GOOD LIFTING PROCEDURE)

Good handling techniques are essential in the prevention of injury from manual handling operations. The correct method of lifting is to use the strong leg and thigh muscles and to maintain the natural shape of the spine throughout the lift.

The following precautions illustrate some important points for basic lifting operations:

- 1) **Plan the lift** - where is the load to be placed? Use any appropriate handling aids. Do you need help with the load? Ensure there are no obstructions to the lift. For a long lift, such as ground to shoulder height, consider resting the load mid-way, if possible, in order to change grip.
- 2) **Place the feet** - feet apart with one leg slightly forward giving a balanced and stable base for lifting.
- 3) **Adopt a good posture** - bend the knees so that the hands, when grasping the load are as nearly level to the waist as possible. Do not kneel or overflex the knees. Keep the back straight (tucking in the chin helps). Lean forward a little over the load if necessary and take a good grip. Keep the shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.
- 4) **Get a firm grip** - try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs. The optimum position and nature will depend on the circumstances and individual preference, but it must be secure. A hook grip is less fatiguing than keeping the fingers straight. If it is necessary to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do this as smoothly as possible.
- 5) **Do not Jerk** - carry out the lifting movement slowly (by straightening the legs) keeping control of the load.
- 6) **Move the feet** - do not twist the trunk when turning to the side.
- 7) **Keep close to the load** - keep the load close to the trunk for as long as possible. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the trunk. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try sliding it towards you before attempting to lift it.
- 8) **Put down, and then adjust** - if precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first (back straight, bend legs) then slide it into the desired position.

**DO NOT RISK INJURY BY ATTEMPTING TO LIFT HEAVY LOADS AND ALWAYS SEEK ASSISTANCE IF YOU FEEL IT NECESSARY.**

**MANAGERS CHECKLIST**

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Have activities that involve manual handling been identified?			
• Has a manual handling risk assessment been carried out on all hazardous operations that cannot be avoided?			
• Has action been taken as a result of the assessment to reduce the risks?			
• Will action be taken to ensure manual handling tasks, so far as reasonably practicable, are avoided? If not possible, do you have mechanical aids to move the load?			
• Where manual handling of loads cannot be avoided, are safe systems of work prepared to ensure the load is handled safely?			
• Is adequate information and training provided to employees carrying out manual handling tasks?			
• Are all manual handling incidents reported and investigated?			
• Are appropriate records being kept?			
• Are there monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the requirements of the policy are being met?			

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