

Manual Handling

More than a third of all over-three-day injuries reported each year to HSE and local authorities are caused by manual handling i.e. the transporting or supporting of loads by hand or by bodily force.

A recent survey of self-reported work-related illness estimated that 1.1 million people in Great Britain suffered from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) caused or made worse by their current or past work. An estimated 12.3 million working days were lost due to these work-related MSDs. On average each sufferer took about 20 days off in that 12-month period.

Preventing such injuries benefits everyone. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations sets out the legal expectations placed upon employers to reduce the impact of the manual handling activity on employees.

The Regulations require employers to:

- avoid the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided; and,
- reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Employees have duties too. They should:

- follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety;
- make proper use of equipment provided for their safety;
- co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters;
- inform the employer if they identify hazardous handling activities;
- take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk.



Avoiding manual handling

In the first instance there needs to be a check to see whether or not the manual handling activity needs to be carried out at all. For example can plumbed in water coolers be used rather than rely on lifting water bottles into place.

Assessing and reducing the risk of injury

Activities that involve the manual handling of objects or people need to be subject to a risk assessment. There is a need to ensure the significant risks are identified and that appropriate controls are introduced to reduce the risk to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable, in other words do what we can to stop people being injured.

Each line manager/supervisor will have access to a local manual handling risk assessor and these assessors should be used to ensure all reasonable steps have been taken and that the

findings of the assessment process have been recorded. However an assessment need not be recorded if:

- it could very easily be repeated and explained at any time because it is simple and obvious; or
- the handling operations are low risk, and are going to last a very short time.

The risk assessments may be written in a way that covers a wide number of geographical places (sometimes called generic) if this is the case there will be a need to make a note on a copy of the assessment to indicate that it is relevant to the location managed by each manager/supervisor.

There may very well be a need to review the assessment depending on individual worker capability, age, pregnancy or other matters that will impede safe handling.

MANUAL HANDLING ASSESSMENT FORM

North Lanarkshire Council

PART 1

Service: _____ Division/Area/Section: _____

Task: _____

Groups/Individuals: _____ Number of People Directly Involved: _____

Date of Assessment: _____ Ref No. _____

Reduce the Risk

The risk assessment should be used to generate a guide on how to undertake the work activity safely. This is sometimes called a safe system of work, a method statement or instruction card.

The automation of the process is one example of reducing the risk or perhaps ordering smaller packs of materials could be considered. The provision of training can also be considered with a variety of courses available across the council.

Practicalities

It will be normal for the need for a manual handling assessment to be identified through the general risk assessment process. Those undertaking general risk assessments will make the recommendation for a manual handling assessment to be undertaken, the manager/supervisor will arrange for a trained assessor to undertake the assessment and use the findings to prepare a safe system of work.

In the absence of a request from a general risk assessor, managers/supervisors can still engage the services of a manual handling assessor where there is an obvious manual handling risk. If the risk is significant in nature then it may be appropriate to defer the activity until further guidance and support can be obtained.

Support Available:

AS11 – Manual Handling of Loads (Arrangement Section)
Manual Handling Awareness Training
Manual Handling Assessor Training
Tool Box Talk – Manual Handling

Manual Handling of Loads - Good Practice

Manual Handling can be defined as the transporting or supporting of a load by one or more employees, which includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, and by reason of its characteristics of unfavourable ergonomic conditions, involves risk, particularly of back injuries to employees.

Manual handling is one of the lead causes of injury across the Council. Below are some simple points that will minimise the chance of receiving an injury involving manual handling tasks. It cannot replace the need for a robust training programme for those activities that risk assessment has identified as needing such.

- Lifting and handling actions are strongest when performed close to the body.

- Symmetrical lifting and handling - using two hands - is safer than using one hand.

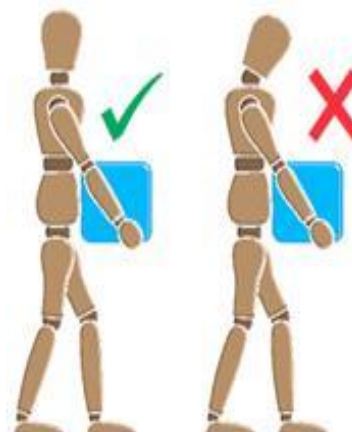


- Plan the lift before you begin and make sure that you know where you are going, and that your path is clear.

- If you are picking something up off the floor or from a low shelf, try to bend your knees and keep your back straight. Let your leg muscles do the work.

- Check the weight of the load before lifting or handling by referring to labels on the load or simply by testing the weight before carrying out a full lift.

- If you are lifting with another person/team, make sure that everyone knows what they are doing before the task begins.



Manual Handling Assessor training and Manual Handling Awareness training are available through the Training Section.

For more information on manual handling training or assessment please contact the **Safety & Wellbeing team** healthandsafety@northlan.gov.uk