

WHS012 Manual Handling and Worker Induction

Legal Application: As per WHS Act 2011 s.27(5)(c) the 'officer', as part of their due diligence requirement should ensure the business has appropriate resources to eliminate or minimise risks. WHS Regulation 2017 Part 4.2 "Hazardous Manual Tasks" deals specifically with employer's duties with respect to manual handling risks

Reference Documents:

- SafeWork NSW: Hazardous Manual Tasks – Code of practice

Purpose

To prevent the occurrence of musculoskeletal injuries caused by manual handling tasks in the workplace.

Scope

This procedure covers any lifting, pushing, pulling or moving of loads or repetitious movement that could result in musculoskeletal injuries.

Responsibilities

Management have the responsibility to:

- identify any tasks requiring manual handling and ensure safe operating procedures are in place to address them.
- provide funding and other resources to improve performance and reduce manual handling risks.
- provide manual handling training and ensuring all workers work in accordance with the standard / safe operating procedures.

Workers have the responsibility to:

- use correct manual handling procedures and techniques, including safe use of equipment.
- adhere to the training provided.
- report to Management if they have not been trained or there is no suitable equipment available to complete the manual handling task.

What kind of injuries can result from manual handling?

Unsafe manual handling may cause a range of injuries, including:

- muscle sprains and strains – sudden onset and gradual onset.
- injuries to muscles, ligaments, intervertebral discs and other structures in the back.
- injuries to soft tissues in the wrist, arms, shoulders, neck or legs.
- abdominal hernias.

Conditions can be acute, trauma injuries or gradual onset where a high level of repetition is involved.

Lifting by hand

Manual handling injuries are minimised if the correct techniques are used and the body is in good physical condition. This applies to sudden injuries and to gradual onset injuries caused by repetitious movement.

How much can be lifted?

There is no legal maximum /minimum lifting limit. Lifting ability partly depends on the body's condition, including flexibility and strength, and physical make-up. Building up strength by a regular exercise program and stretching your body before doing any heavy or awkward manual handling task can assist with minimising the risk of injury

Sizing up the load:

Consider size, weight, shape, ability to grasp, height, and distance to be transported. Also ensure the load inside any box or container is stable. A moving load increases risk as it is being lifted and carried.

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Procedure

- Risk assessments will be carried out on all manual handling tasks using the hierarchical system of control. (Refer to WHS006 Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment Control)
- If possible manual handling tasks will be eliminated, however if that is not possible then reorganising the workspace to minimise direct worker manual handling, mechanical aids such as trolleys, along with good levels of training and supervision will be implemented.
- All workers will be trained in correct manual handling techniques and standard operating procedures (SOP) or equivalent created for standard tasks.
- SOP's will then be used as training documents.
- All unsafe manual handling incidents will be recorded in the Hazard and Incident Report module in HII Safe.

Lifting correctly

There are 7 key principles to be applied to correct lifting.

- Keep feet approx. shoulder width apart or parted--one alongside the object and one behind the object, so that you can stand as close to the object as possible. Comfortably spread feet give greater stability.
- Keep back straight. Use the squat or half kneel position to do so, but remember that "straight" does not mean absolutely "vertical". A straight back helps keeps the spine, back muscles, in correct alignment.
- Grasp the object with the whole hand for maximum strength. Fingers alone have very little power. Wearing gloves may be beneficial in some circumstances.
- Keep eyes looking straight ahead and neck and shoulders squared and upright. Keep knees bent and use your legs to begin to straighten your body to take the weight of the load.
- Tuck elbows and arms in and hold load close to body. When the arms are held away from the body, they lose much of their strength and power. Keeping the arms tucked in also helps keep body weight centered
- Keep body weight directly over feet. This provides a more powerful line of thrust and ensures better balance.
- Never twist the trunk - always move your feet to align with direction of travel.

Note: When setting the load down, use the same lifting steps in reverse.

Change of direction

To change direction, lift the object to the carrying position and turn the entire body including the feet. Never twist the body as this is a common cause of back injury, particular sudden or sharp twisting.

Team lifting

- When two or more people carry one object, adjust the load so that it rides level.
- When team lifting, designate one person to give the signal when to lift.
- When team lifting make sure that you and your lifting partner are of similar strength.

Remember: The important principles for safe manual handling are:

- Avoid twisting your body while turning with a load.
- Maintain a straight back wherever possible.
- Use strong leg muscles to help lift the load.
- Use assistive equipment when provided to help move the load.
- Avoid high reaching and high lifting. Use a suitable, sturdy platform to reach the load.
- Do not catch or throw loads.
- Check for overall weight and shape, nails, splinters, rough strapping etc.
- Always maintain good visibility- particularly in areas with poor sight lines slopes or stairs.
- Consider having one person direct the group through the lift.

Specific Risks to Hospitality

• Trolleys

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Trolleys should be in good condition with wheels kept clean and with easy movement. Trolleys must never be overloaded, or loads stacked too high onto the trolley.

- **Beds**
It is imperative bed castors are in good condition to allow beds to be easily moved as this is a common cause of back injury.
- **Kegs**
It is recommended that a trolley or other type of material handling equipment be used for lifting and transporting kegs. If it is necessary to roll keg, push against the sides with both hands. To change directions, stop the keg and change direction by holding the upper and lower rim seams.
- **Compressed gas cylinders**
It is recommended that a hand trolley or other type of material handling equipment be used for lifting and transporting gas cylinders. Cylinders may be rolled on the bottom edge for short distances, but never dragged. Ideally, use two people to move the cylinder and be very careful not to knock the cylinder against anything. Cylinders should never be moved by holding the cover of the exit valve. When storing cylinders, they should always be secured with a chain or rope to avoid falling.

Also refer to the Goulburn Club's one page SOP at <https://goulburnclub.com.au/documents/WHS/SWMS-Manual-Handling.pdf>