

H7 – Opening Statement

Manual Handling

According to the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, Manual Handling is defined as: ‘...any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force.’

These activities are inherent in almost every job which is possibly why musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common occupational illness in Great Britain, affecting one million people a year. The problem which affects employees most often is back pain, however MSDs also include joint injuries and repetitive strain injuries of various kinds.

It is important that employers understand the risks associated with manual handling and take appropriate measures to assess and ultimately reduce the risks, so the likelihood of suffering from MSDs such as back pain are reduced. The Manual Handling Procedure is a guide to enable responsible managers to comply with the aforementioned piece of legislation.



H7 – Manual Handling

What is this?

This is a written procedure which explains the duties of the responsible manager in relation to compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

The person responsible for implementing this procedure is:

What is required?

The person responsible for implementing this procedure must ensure that:

- Suitable and sufficient manual handling assessments are undertaken on all activities that pose a significant risk;
 - The aforementioned assessments are undertaken by a competent person;
 - An action plan is put in place to rectify any issues identified through the manual handling assessment;
 - All relevant employees are informed of the findings of the assessments, and arrange effective manual handling training for the employees;
 - Employees are provided with the correct equipment to enable them to undertake all manual handling tasks safely;
 - All damaged equipment is repaired or replaced immediately;
 - Every employee is consulted prior to any changes taking place which may effect the manual handling arrangements within the workplace (and if any changes take place the manual handling assessment must be reviewed).
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What about employees?

All employees should:

- Use all equipment that is provided to minimise the risk of a manual handling injury;
 - Report any damages or defects to the provided equipment directly to the responsible manager;
 - Apply the correct manual handling techniques when necessary.
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Manual handling assessment

Manual handling assessments should only be conducted if the original risk assessment identifies that the activity poses a significant risk of injury. Aspects to consider when undertaking a manual handling assessment:

- The **person** – fitness, old injuries, training, competency, attitude, disabilities;
- The **equipment** – fit for purpose, inspected, maintained, PPE, bulky, difficult to grasp;
- The **task** – climbing, throwing, stooping, twisting, lifting, duration, repetitive;
- The **environment** – dusty, noisy, uneven surfaces, inside or outside, access and egress, visibility.

Note: Always take into account the existing control measures used for the activity.



Control hierarchy

The hierarchy of control measure regarding manual handling is as follows:

1. If possible, **avoid** manual lifting altogether. Is there an alternative method of manoeuvring the load or redesigning the task?
 2. **Assess** the potential risks to a person's health and safety that cannot be avoided.
 3. **Act** on any findings identified through the manual handling assessment.
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Control measures

Once the assessment has been undertaken and it has identified that further controls are required, the following should be considered:

- Redesigning the task or the work area where the risk is significant (ergonomics);
 - Contacting suppliers to organise any deliveries in smaller packages, or ask whether packages can be stored on suitable containers to facilitate unloading on delivery;
 - Splitting the loads received from suppliers;
 - The provision of mechanical assistance (lifting equipment);
 - Job rotation to reduce repetitive handling;
 - The provision of sack trucks and other similar equipment;
 - Information given to employees on how to apply the correct techniques through manual handling training;
 - Team lifting;
 - Personal protective equipment (only issued as a last resort).
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Sensible lifting

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 does not specify a maximum weight for an individual to lift. An individual should only lift a load with which they feel comfortable.

Note: This will normally be emphasised through effective manual handling training. This training should only be undertaken by a competent person.

Legislation

The two main pieces of legislation for this procedure are:

- Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999
 - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
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Associated documentation

- Manual handling assessment H&SMH01

