

RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE

MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT

What's the problem?

More than a third of injuries lasting more than three days reported to the Health & Safety Executive each year arise from manual handling. Most injuries are to the back, though hands, arms and feet are also vulnerable.

British business loses an estimated 4.9 million days to employee absence each year through work-related back conditions, with each affected employee taking an average of 19 days off work. This costs business, the NHS and economy £5bn per year.

Sometimes the victim never recovers. Manual handling injuries build up over time rather than being caused by a single accident.

What should I do about it?

Consider the risks from manual handling to the health and safety of your employees. If risks exist, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations apply.

What are my duties?

Employers should:

- Avoid the need for hazardous manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable
- Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided; and
- Reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable.

How do you know if there is a risk of injury?

It is a matter of judgement in each case, but there are certain things to look out for, such as:

- excessive fatigue
- bad posture
- cramped and/or untidy work areas
- awkward or heavy loads
- a history of back troubles.

Who should make the assessment?

This is the employer's responsibility and, in most instances, should be carried out in-house since you know your business better than anyone. In the main, this will simply require a few minutes observation to identify ways of making the activity less demanding and so easier and less risky.

What role can employees play in carrying out assessments?

Involve employees in the process since they often have a better understanding of the processes than anyone. However, final responsibility for assessments rests with employers.

Do assessments need to be recorded?

There is no requirement to record all assessments, only those where the assessment findings are significant or where it would not be easy to repeat the exercise.

However, it would be good practice to maintain records of all assessments.

Are assessments required for each individual employee and workplace?

It is acceptable to undertake a generic assessment that is common to several employees or to more than one site or type of work. The important thing is to identify the risk of injury and point the way for practical improvements.

How should assessments be used?

The purpose of assessments is to pinpoint the worst features of the work - and these are the ones that should be tackled first. It is important to remember to update the assessment when significant changes are made in the workplace.

How far must the risk be reduced?

To the 'lowest level' reasonably practicable. That means reducing the risk until the cost of further precautions - in time, trouble or money - would be far too great in proportion to the benefits.

Should mechanical aids be provided in every instance?

It depends upon whether it is reasonably practicable to do so. If the risks identified in the risk assessments can be reduced or eliminated reasonably by means of mechanical aids, you should provide them. But you should always consider mechanical aids - they can improve productivity as well as safety. Even something as simple as a stack truck can make a big improvement.

Where can I get further information?

To help you manage your manual handling risk we attach

- examples of outline and detailed assessment forms
- guidance on reducing the risk
- copies of the Health and Safety Executive's guidelines on load weights.

Our separate guidance for employees on good lifting technique is also available.

The following are available from HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 or online at www.hsebooks.com/Books/
L23, Manual handling: guidance on Regulations
INDG110, Lighten the load — guidance for employees on musculoskeletal disorders
INDG143, Getting to grips with manual handling

The HSE has in addition produced a wide range of leaflets providing guidance and best practice advice applicable to various industries and occupations.

IMPORTANT

The information set out in this document constitutes a set of general guidelines and should not be construed or relied upon as specialist advice. Therefore **MORE TH>N BUSINESS** accepts no responsibility towards any person relying upon these Risk Management Guidelines nor accepts any liability whatsoever for the accuracy of data supplied by another party or the consequences of reliance upon it.

Outline Risk Assessment

Assessment Details - Please refer to detailed assessment and guidelines

Department

Location

Work Activities Involved

Persons Affected

Overall Level of Risk High Medium Low

Assessment Date Name of Assessor(s)

Review Date

Signature of Assessor(s)

Remedial Action Required	By Whom	Date Completed
Immediate		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Short Term (specify Date)		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Long Term (specify Date)		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	

Authorised by

Signature Date

Detailed Assessment

Questions

If you answer YES consider level of risk

Level Of Risk

Low Medium High

Remedial Action

1. The Tasks

	Yes	No		
Do they involve:				
a. Holding loads away from the body trunk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
b. twisting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
c. stooping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
d. reaching upwards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
e. large vertical movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
f. long carrying movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
g. strenuous pushing/ pulling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
h. sudden movement of loads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
i. repetitive handling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
j. inadequate rest time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
k. workrate set by process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

2. The Loads

Are they:				
a. heavy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
b. bulky or unwieldy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
c. difficult to grasp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
d. unstable or unpredictable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
e. harmful (hot/cold/sharp)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3. Working Environment?

Are there:				
a. constraints on posture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
b. poor floors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
c. variations in levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
d. hot/cold/humid conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
e. strong air movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
f. poor lighting conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Questions

If you answer YES consider level of risk

Level Of Risk

Low Medium High

Remedial Action**4. Individual Capability**

	Yes	No		
Does the job:				
a. require unusual capability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
b. create hazard for those with health problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
c. create hazard for those who are pregnant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
d. call for special information/training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
e. require large vertical movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

5. Other Factors

Is movement or posture hindered by clothing or personal protective equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Reducing the Risk of Injury

1. The Tasks

	Yes	No
Can you		
a. Improve workplace layout to improve efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Reduce the amount of twisting and stooping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reduce carrying distances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Avoid repetitive handling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Avoid strenuous pushing or pulling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Avoid sudden movement of loads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. The Loads

Can you and/or your suppliers help to make the load:

a. Lighter or less bulky?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Easier to grasp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. More stable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Less damaging to hold?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Working Environment?

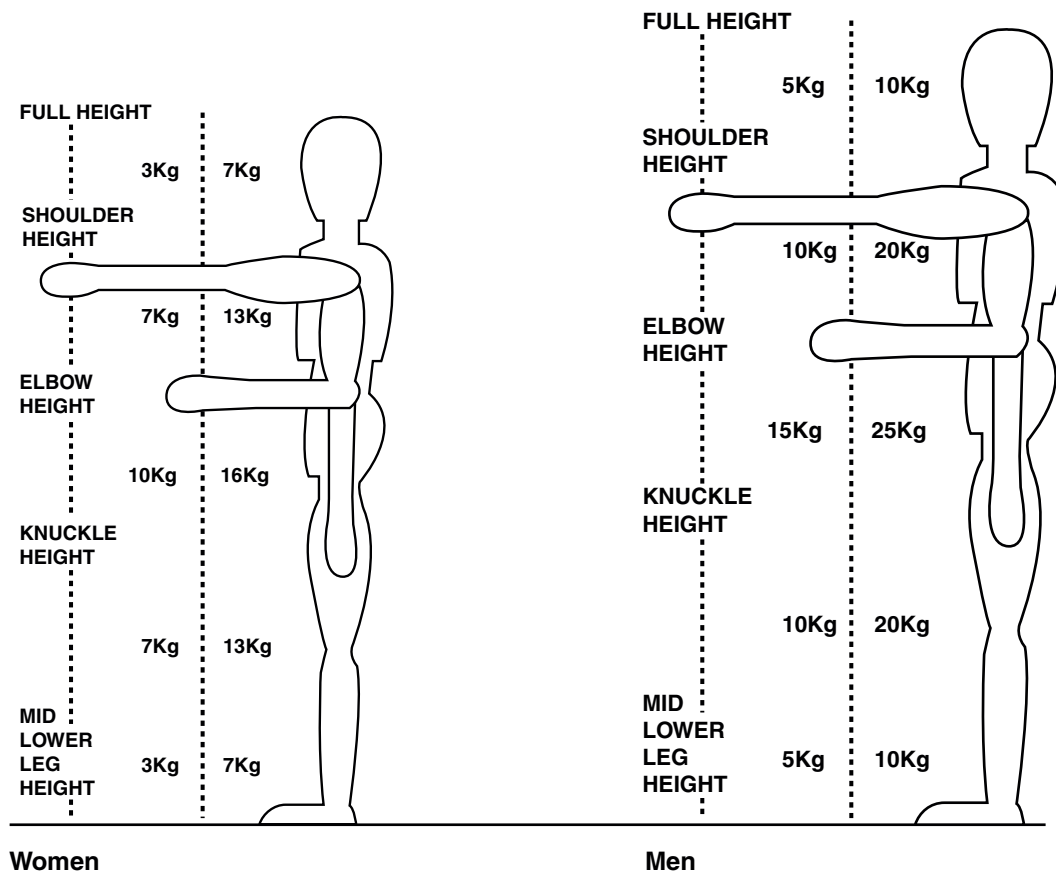
Can you:

a. Remove obstacles to free movement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Provide better flooring?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Avoid steps and spread ramps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Prevent extremes of hot and cold?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Improve lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Consider less restrictive clothing or personal equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Individual Capability?

Can you

a. Take better care of those who have a physical weakness or who are pregnant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Give your employees more information e.g. about the range of tasks they are likely to face?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Provide better training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



General and Numerical Guidelines

Each box in the diagram shows guideline weights for lifting and lowering.

The weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands; and the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions with the lifter in a stable body position.

If the lifter's hands enter more than one box during the operation use the smallest weight.

Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to the boundary between boxes.

If the operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes make a more detailed assessment.

Note:

There is no such thing as a completely 'safe' manual handling operation. But working within the guidelines will cut out the risk and reduce the need for a more detailed assessment.