

Manual Handling Procedure

1. Overview of the Procedure

This procedure is a guide for staff in safe manual handling practices. All staff are responsible for following steps detailed in this procedure for any manual handling activity as defined below.

This procedure should be read with the Work Health and Safety Policy.

2. Considerations

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures or repetitive movements. Good manual handling techniques can help to prevent injury.

Individuals, no matter what age or gender have differing physical abilities.

3. Procedure Steps

3.1 Managing Manual Handling Risk

[insert position] identifies work activities that involve manual handling and which may pose a risk to employees. Risks are evaluated and treated. The CEO/Manager ensures monitoring and review of all manual handling systems and procedures on a regular basis.

Assessment of Risk

Each manual handling job is broken down into individual tasks to assist in identifying the range of potential manual handling hazards.

Manual handling hazards are considered through employee consultation, reviewing incident reports and workers compensation records, and through observation.

[insert position] and staff observe and record:

- workplace and workflow design
- how and where equipment is used
- how tools are stored and accessed
- tasks that require awkward postures and movements and/or that are forceful or repetitive

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- how workers perform their tasks
- how workers might be injured.

When assessing manual handling risks, consider the following:

- workplace and workstation layout
- worker's posture and position
- duration and frequency of manual handling
- load location and distance to be moved
- characteristics of the load
- available equipment and resources to assist moving the load
- work environment
- staff member's health, skill and experience
- particular needs of the staff member.

Hazards are prioritised, taking into consideration likelihood, consequences and controls. Refer to the Risk Management Policy for details on risk management.

[insert position] addresses hazards with the highest rated risk of injury as a priority.

Minimising Manual Handling Risk

[insert position] ensures work practices are designed to minimise risk and be consistent with the safe handling of objects.

All objects, work practices and the working environment are designed, constructed and maintained so as to eliminate risks arising from manual handling.

The NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation establishes a hierarchy of controls to minimise risk as outlined below:

- Substitute the hazard with a lesser hazard, for example use two x 20kg bags instead of one x 40kg bag
- Isolate the hazard from the person
- Minimise the risk by engineering means, for example ensuring staff have adjustable workstations to avoid unnecessary reaching or bending
- Minimise the risk by administrative means, such as providing training
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to assist with the move
- If one measure does not control the risk, a combination is used.

Where it is not practical to eliminate manual handling risks, **[insert position]** designs the work activity to control these risks and, if necessary:

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- Modify the design of objects or the work environment taking into account work design and work practices
- Provide mechanical aids or as a last resort use team lifting
- Ensure staff are trained in manual handling techniques, correct use of aids and team lifting procedures.

3.2 Assessing the Lift

Before undertaking to lift an object, assess the start and finish heights and ensure clear pathways.

For objects over 16kg use mechanical aids or, as a last resort use two or more people.

For large (awkward) objects (even light ones) use mechanical aids or 2 person lift

Consider your own capacity: do you have existing injuries or are you recovering from an illness?

3.3 Performing a Lift

In preparation for lifting an object, warm up the muscles by stretching and then test the weight of the load.

Begin with a smaller load using a whole hand grip.

For good balance, use a wide base of support and position yourself with your feet shoulder width apart.

Use smooth motions and hold the load close to the body.

Maintain the natural curves of the spine as you move through the lift.

Use hip and knee joints to bend to the object rather than bending the spine in exaggerated curves. Do not twist or bend the back sideways.

There is equipment **[insert type of equipment, such as trolley]** available to assist staff to move and lift heavy items. The equipment is stored in the **[insert location]**.

3.4 If Discomfort Occurs

Following the lift or move, report any discomfort you feel to your direct supervisor.

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Apply ice initially to the area and try to rest the area. Apply heat, stretches and massage to the area, keeping active to hasten recovery.

If discomfort does not subside, report incident to supervisor and complete an Incident Report Form.

Consult your medical practitioner if pain or discomfort does not settle.

3.5 Monitoring and Review

All employees identify new manual handling hazards, and report them to their supervisor. **[insert position]** checks that solutions are appropriate and have not created new problems, checks the register of injuries and incident reports, and updates work procedures regularly.

In addition to the annual review of risks and manual handling risk assessments, measures adopted to control the risk are reviewed when:

- There is evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid, for example due to changes in technology or knowledge or from an incident investigation and/or report.
- An illness or injury results from exposure to the hazard.