

The Glasgow School of Art

GSA Manual Handling Risk Assessment Procedure February 2017

Policy Control

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1. Scope

This document sets out the standards to be achieved by all GSA academic and professional support areas to ensure compliance with legal requirements relating to manual handling. It also offers guidance and information on how to do this.

2. Introduction

Incorrect manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. It causes work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which account for over a third of all workplace injuries. Manual handling injuries can happen wherever there are people at work. Heavy work, awkward postures, manual materials handling, and previous or existing injury are all risk factors in developing MSDs.

The back in particular, is prone to injury caused by incorrect or excessive manual handling, and permanent injuries or chronic and very painful conditions can occur. Back injuries can often result in long term illness and absence, which can place a strain on the injured person, their family, the employer and workplace in general.

It is in the interests of all that manual handling operations are continually assessed, with the objectives of removing or significantly reducing the likelihood of foreseeable injuries.

Other injuries associated with manual handling should also be considered. These include other MSDs to upper limbs and neck, fractures, crush injuries, cuts and abrasions, sprains, strains and hernias.

Although the extent may vary considerably, most jobs within GSA will involve some manual handling activities.

3. Definition of manual handling

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) define “manual handling operations” as

“.. any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force” and “load” includes any person and any animal;

4. Legal Considerations

The purpose of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) is to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.

To comply with the regulations, employers must follow five basic steps:

1. Identify all manual handling operations undertaken by their employees;
2. Make an initial appraisal of all operations to determine if there is a significant risk of injury to employees;
3. Avoid manual handling tasks where reasonably practicable, e.g. by substituting with a sack barrow, trolley or forklift truck etc.;
4. Make a full assessment of unavoidable risky operations taking into account the load, task, the working environment and the individual capability of the workers;
5. Remove or reduce the risk of injury by implementing control measures designed to eliminate or minimise the risks of injury to the lowest level so far as reasonably practicable.

In the context of the Regulations, compliance with the term 'reasonably practicable' would be satisfied where it can be shown that the cost of any further preventative measures would be grossly disproportionate to the further benefits gained from their introduction.

The following legislation, which places duties on GSA towards employees and those who may be affected by its activities, should also be considered when planning any type of manual handling activity.

- The Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER).
- Depending upon the nature of the activity or task other health and safety legislation may also be significant.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Heads of School and Professional Support Areas

Under the GSA Occupational Health and Safety Policy, Heads of School and Professional Support areas are accountable to their respective Executive Group Member. Heads of School and Professional Support areas have responsibility to ensure that within their programmes of risk assessment there is provision for assessing and controlling manual handling operations that could result in an injury.

5.2 Heads of Departments and Programme Leaders or their Professional Support equivalent

Within this procedure Heads of Departments and Programme Leaders or their professional support equivalent are referred to as line manager.

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that:

- Any hazardous manual handling operations under their control are avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Where such handling operations cannot be avoided, suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken and control measures implemented to adequately reduce the level of risk, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Those undertaking manual handling risk assessments consult the staff carrying out manual handling operations, so that a detailed, accurate and representative assessment of the manual handling operation can be made;
- Suitable manual handling training is provided for staff members for whom manual handling operations form a significant part of their role. Additionally, adequate supervision, instruction and information regarding manual handling operations should be provided to such staff members. For example, the weight of each load/load component; is the load liable to shift during handling; or where the centre of gravity of a load is etc.;
- Staff are considered to be suitably fit to undertake manual handling operations, so far as can be reasonably determined;

- Appropriate time is allocated so that manual handling operations can be undertaken safely;
- Staff members are aware of, and follow the control measures in place with regard to any manual handling operations within their respective areas, as outlined in relevant risk assessments, (see section 6 on completing a risk assessment);
- Risk assessments are reviewed periodically, or if circumstances change. For example, if an injury is sustained during a manual handling operation; the items being handled change in weight or size, or the frequency of handling operations change, or a new or expectant mother joins or is already a staff member, etc.;
- Suitable equipment to alleviate manual handling operations is provided, so far as is reasonably practicable. Equipment where provided should be suitably inspected and maintained, and staff should be trained in the use of the equipment;
- Any incidents/accidents relating to manual handling operations are thoroughly investigated, reported through the correct channels and any remedial actions implemented in a timely manner;

5.3 Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety, and the safety of others who may be affected by their activities;
- Correctly using any system of work in place for manual handling operations;
- Avoiding hazardous manual handling operations by use of any appropriate equipment providing for manual handling operations, in accordance with the training and instructions given to them. Such equipment will include machinery and other aids provided for the safe handling of loads;
- Informing their line manager of any concerns that might reasonably be considered to affect their ability to undertake manual handling operations safely, e.g. pregnancy, a history of back, knee or hip trouble, hernia etc.;
- Reporting any accident, incident, injury or near-miss immediately to their line manager/supervisor;
- Wearing appropriate clothing (that permits good posture, hand and foot grip etc.) and personal protective equipment for the task, or as specified in the risk assessment;
- Undergoing any suitable training identified.

6. Manual Handling Risk Assessment

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) outlines the requirement to:

- **Avoid** the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable. Consider whether the load needs moving or can the task be taken to the load. Consider the use of mechanical handling aids

- **Assess** the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided. Identify ways to make the activity easier and less risky, i.e. less physically demanding.
- **Reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable. This means reducing the risk until the cost of any further precautions, time, effort or money, would be far too great in proportion to the benefits.

Making an assessment of a task or activity for manual handling operations

Appendix 1: *Manual Handling Assessment Flowchart* illustrates the overall process

A general risk assessment should be undertaken to determine if the task or activity involves the manual handling of loads. GSA's Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure is a separate document which establishes an overarching framework for risk assessment, including manual handling risk assessment. Both regular and irregular activities associated with the task or activity should also be taken into account when carrying out the general risk assessment, as these may reveal occasional or sporadic manual handling operations that need to be assessed in more detail, i.e. by undertaking a, more detailed, manual handling risk assessment.

Where manual handling operations cannot be avoided, GSA has a duty to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to health and safety. (*See Appendix 2: General risk assessment guidance and Appendix 3: Summary of good manual handling technique*)

6.1 Step 1 - Identify manual handling operations

If a general risk assessment identifies manual handling operations associated with the activity or task the *GSA Manual Handling of Loads Risk Assessment Form* (see Appendix 4) should be used.

Those involved in the manual handling risk assessment process should consider the hazards and risks involved in any activity or task and decide what can be done to reduce the risks. Consequently, those carrying out risk assessment require knowledge of the work area and the types of task involved. They should also consult personnel who undertake the tasks, as they are often aware of problems and ways of avoiding them.

It is important, when carrying out manual handling risk assessment, to take into account both the regular activities that are undertaken, and any irregular activities that may foreseeably occur during manual handling operations.

Regular activities – In such cases, staff are exposed to frequent and / or repetitive (continuous, hourly, daily, weekly or monthly) manual handling hazards, e.g. deliveries of gas bottles, food and consumables; distribution of books, installation of computers etc.

Irregular activities – These are activities that are carried out infrequently and sometimes at irregular times. Consequently, if not adequately controlled, these activities may present a higher risk of injury due to for example, insufficient staff being available or the activity is subject to a time constraint. Examples could include a change to an office layout or a relocation of premises due to fire or flood damage, loading and unloading of sand/grit during winter months. Even though the activities may be irregular in frequency the same level of duty applies to reduce the level of risk from any manual handling operation as for a regular occurring activity.

6.2 Step 2 - Identify those carrying out manual handling operations

Any staff that might be expected to carry out manual handling operations, whether regularly or

infrequently should receive adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision in order to enable them to carry out manual handling operations safely and effectively, using the correct lifting and handling techniques and appropriate equipment where necessary and as outlined in the risk assessment for that particular task.

This should also extend to staff, whose main duty does not include manual handling but who could occasionally be expected to carry and lift certain items.

Individuals have different physical capabilities and characteristics and these should be taken into account when assessing the task.

Existing or pre-existing physical conditions may affect a person's ability to carry out manual handling tasks and should be taken into account.

Similar consideration should also be given to changes in the capabilities of individuals. For example, a new or expectant mother; a person recuperating from a recent surgical operation; anyone suffering from a recent back injury, or a new health condition that could affect a person's ability to lift safely.

6.3 Step 3 - Evaluate risk from manual handling operations

Evaluate the level of risk from the manual handling operation(s), and if any controls are in place to reduce the level of risk, decide whether these are adequate or if more should be done, i.e. carry out a more detailed risk (manual handling) assessment.

The risk of injury can be reduced by consideration of the following hierarchy of control options;

- **Eliminating** the need for handling at source (e.g. delivery of goods by supplier to point of use)
- **Automating or mechanising**, e.g. the use of pallet trucks, sack trucks and trollies to transfer loads rather than carrying them
- **Re-arranging** the workplace, e.g. store heavier items at waist height; store more commonly used items near to point of use; purchase smaller unit sizes if possible and
- **Providing instruction**, training and supervision to staff in moving and handling techniques so that they are able to carry out manual handling operations more safely and identify any hazards that might arise.

6.4 Step 4 - Implement the results of the evaluation

If, following the evaluation, any remedial actions are required; the following points should be implemented:

- Remedial steps should be listed in order of priority (see Appendix 4, section C)
- A responsible person with the appropriate authority should be allocated to implement any controls
- A target date should be set for implementation of those controls
- An indication of whether or not the controls have been completed
- Staff should then be informed of the results, the procedures to be followed and the

supervisory requirements (if any)

- Effectiveness of the change(s) to be monitored. It may be necessary to review and revise any changes as necessary if circumstances change.

6.5 Step 5 - Record the results of the manual handling risk assessment

All significant findings from the risk assessment must be recorded. The risk assessment form should include the following details:

- Name and details of the person carrying out the assessment
- The significant findings of the assessment
- Any recommended remedial actions
- The person responsible for carrying out the recommended remedial actions and
- The date of the assessment and the review date

6.6 Step 6 – Reviewing manual handling risk assessments

Manual Handling risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and modified if necessary. However, assessments should be reviewed at any time:

- If significant changes are made to existing workplaces, work activities, projects, equipment, or materials/substances in use, such that the original assessments are no longer valid.
- If new or temporary members of staff are employed who may be more at risk due to inexperience, age or physical or mental health conditions and disabilities.
- If female staff are pregnant, and their work could give rise to a health risk to the mother or unborn child.
- If new legislation, guidance, codes of practice or national standards are introduced.
- If workplace inspections, accidents or near misses highlight deficiencies in existing risk control measures or previously unforeseen hazards.

7. Typical manual handling problems and ways of reducing the risk of injury

The outcome of the risk assessment process should be to reduce risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, by use of suitable control measures.

The manual handling assessment should take into account a range of relevant factors that exist or are foreseeable within the manual handling operation.

These include:

- the tasks;
- the loads;
- the working environment;

- individual capability;
- Handling aids and equipment, and
- Work organisational factors

Appendix 5: Typical manual handling problems and ways of reducing the risk can be used as an aide-memoire during the risk assessment process and includes examples, for each of the above categories, of problems to look for when making an assessment, and ways of reducing the risk of injury from manual handling operations.

8. Further information on Manual Handling

The Health and Safety Executive website has a range of publications and other materials relating to manual handling at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manualhandling.htm>

Detailed guidance is contained in the publication *Manual handling - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 - Guidance on Regulations* available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l23.pdf>

Other available publications and tools include:

- Manual handling at work: A brief guide: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>
- Making the best use of lifting and handling aids: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg398.pdf>

HSE has also developed two tools to help assess the most common risk factors.

- For lifting, carrying and team handling this is the Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC).

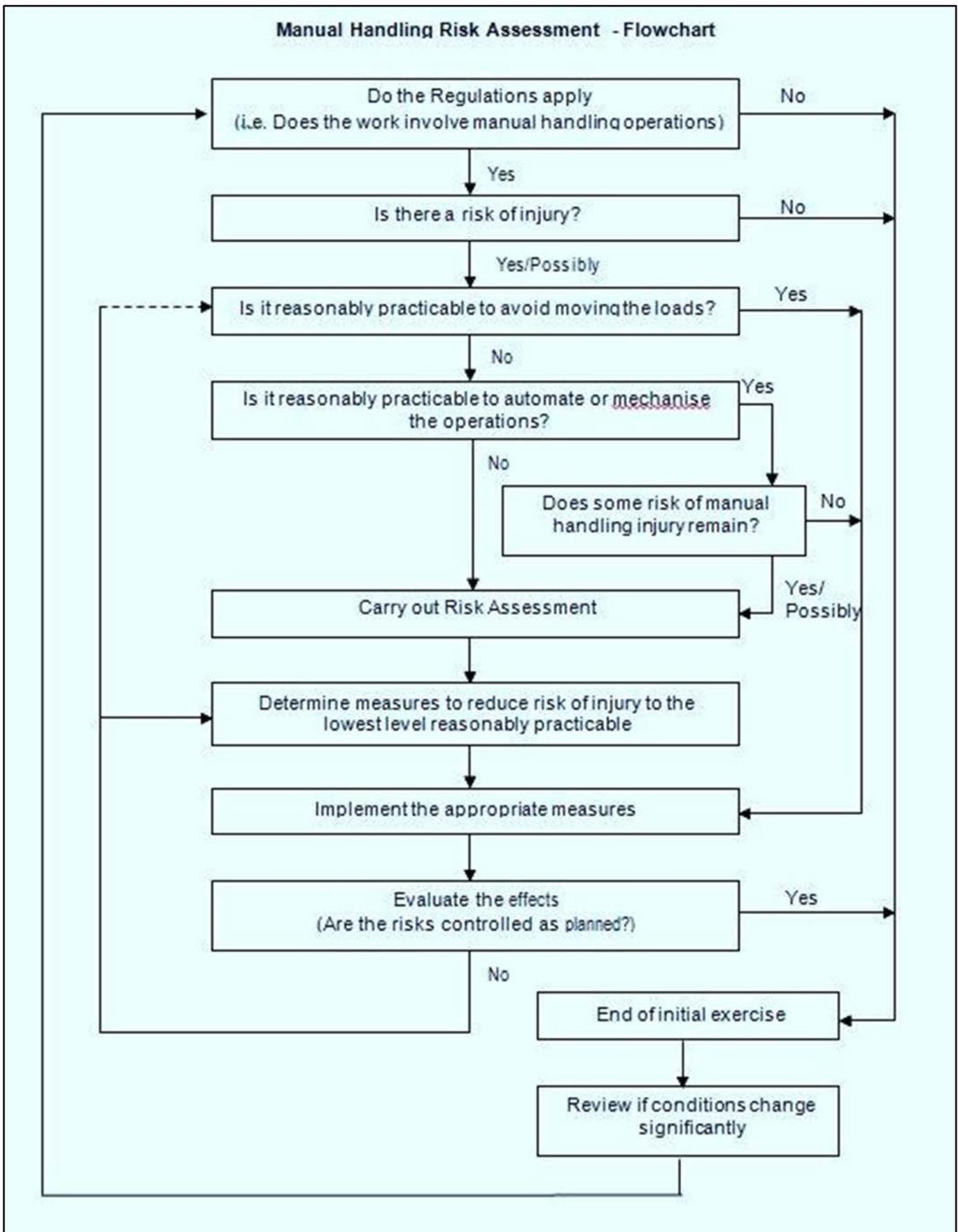
This is available here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf>

- For risk assessment of pushing and pulling this is the RAPP tool.

This is available here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg478.pdf>

The MAC and RAPP tools can help identify high-risk manual handling operations and to complete detailed risk assessments.

Appendix 1: Manual Handling Assessment Flowchart



Appendix 2: General risk assessment guidelines

The main duty is to avoid lifting operations that have a risk of injury. Where it is not practicable to do this, assess each lifting operation and reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The risk of injury is a matter of judgement in each case, but there are certain things to look out for, such as people puffing and sweating, excessive fatigue, bad posture, cramped work areas, awkward or heavy loads or people with a history of back trouble. The staff involved can often highlight which activities are difficult or hard work.

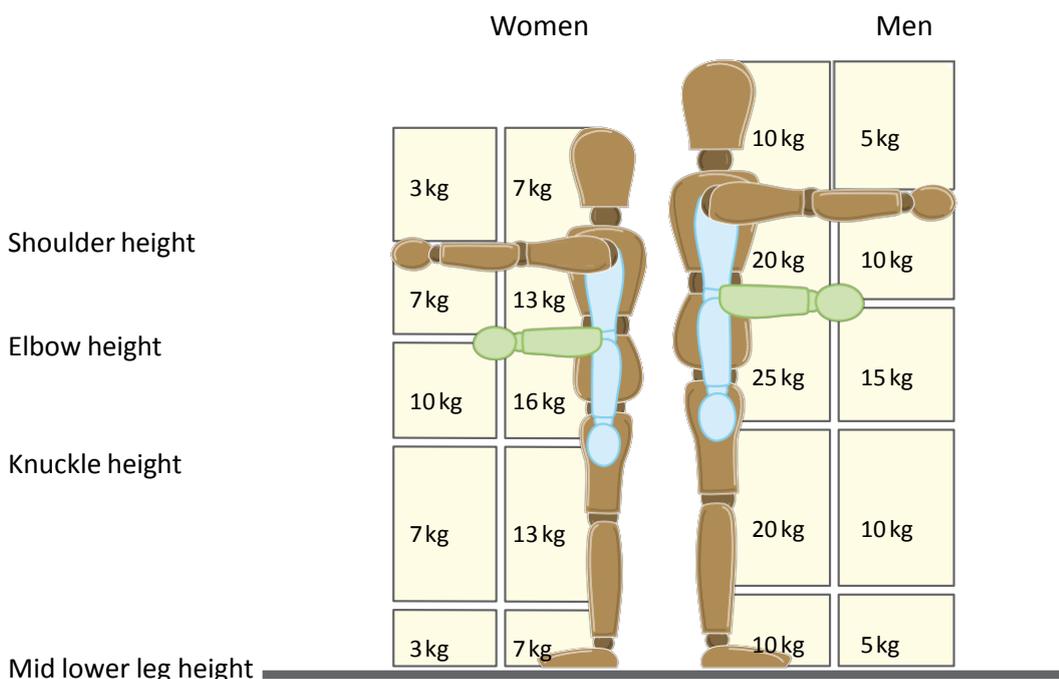
These general risk assessment guidelines should help to identify when you need to do a more detailed risk assessment. In addition, working within the guidelines will cut the risk and reduce the need for a more detailed assessment.

Use Figure 1 to make a quick and easy assessment. Each box contains a guideline weight for lifting and lowering in that zone. (As you can see, the guideline weights are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to happen.)

1. Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to the diagram.
2. Decide which box or boxes the lifter's hands pass through when moving the load.
3. Assess the maximum weight being handled.
 - a) If it is less than the figure given in the box, the operation is within the guidelines.
 - b) 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 a boundary between boxes.

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

Figure 1 Lifting and lowering



Twisting

- Reduce the guideline weights if the handler twists to the side during the operation. As a rough guide, reduce them by 10% if the handler twists beyond 45°, and
- By 20% if the handler twists beyond 90°.

Frequent lifting and lowering

- The guideline weights are for infrequent operations (up to about 30 operations per hour) where the pace of work is not forced, adequate pauses to rest or use different muscles are possible, and the load is not supported by the handler for any length of time. Reduce the weights if the operation is repeated more often. As a rough guide, reduce the weights by 30% if the operation is repeated once or twice a minute, by 50% if it is repeated 5–8 times a minute, and by 80% where it is repeated more than 12 times a minute.

Pushing and pulling

The task is within the guidelines if the figures in Table 2 are not exceeded:

Table 2	Men	Women
Force to stop or start the load	20kg	15 kg
Sustained force to keep the load in motion	10kg	7 kg

Using the results: Is a more detailed assessment required?

Using Figure 1 is a first step. If it shows the manual handling is within the guideline figures (bearing in mind the reduced limits for twisting and frequent lifts) you do not need to do any more in most cases. But you will need to make a more detailed assessment if the:

- Conditions given for using the guidelines (e.g. that the load can be readily grasped with both hands) are not met;
- Person doing the lifting has reduced capacity, e.g. through ill health or pregnancy;
- Handling operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes in the diagram; or
- Guideline figures in the diagram are exceeded.

For pushing and pulling, you should make a more detailed assessment if:

- There are extra risk factors like uneven floors or constricted spaces;
- The worker can't push or pull the load with their hands between knuckle and shoulder height;
- The load has to be moved for more than about 20 m without a break; or
- The guideline figures in Table 2 are likely to be exceeded.

Appendix 3: Summary of good manual handling technique

The risk should be as low as *reasonably practicable*. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risk in terms of money, time and trouble.

Mechanical aids should be provided where it is *reasonably practicable* to do so and the risks identified in the risk assessment can be reduced or eliminated by this means. Even something as simple as a sack truck can make a big improvement.



While training is important but remember that, on its own, it can't overcome:

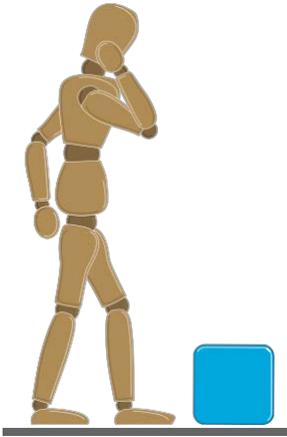
- A lack of mechanical aids;
- Unsuitable loads;
- Bad working conditions.

Training should cover:

- Manual handling risk factors and how injuries can occur;
- How to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling technique (see 'Good handling technique for lifting' and 'Good handling technique for pushing and pulling' below);
- Appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- Use of mechanical aids;
- Practical work to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely.

Good handling technique for lifting

Here are some practical tips, suitable for use in training people in safe manual handling.



1. **Think before lifting/handling.** Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.



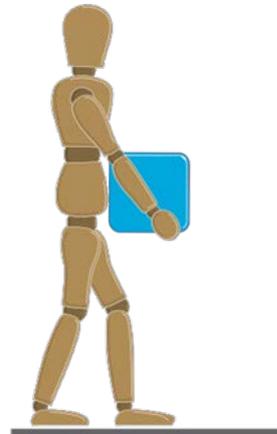
2. **Adopt a stable position.** The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). The worker should be prepared to move their feet during the lift to maintain their stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.



3. **Get a good hold.** Where possible, the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only

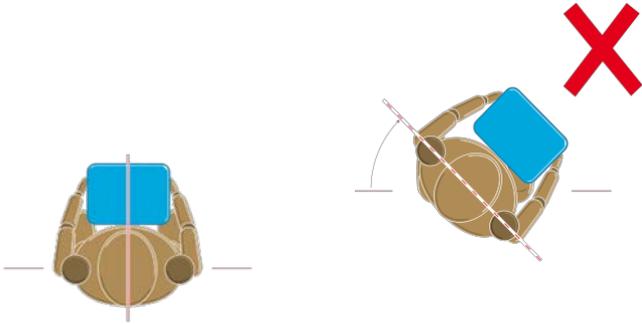
Start in a good posture. At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Don't flex the back any further while lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

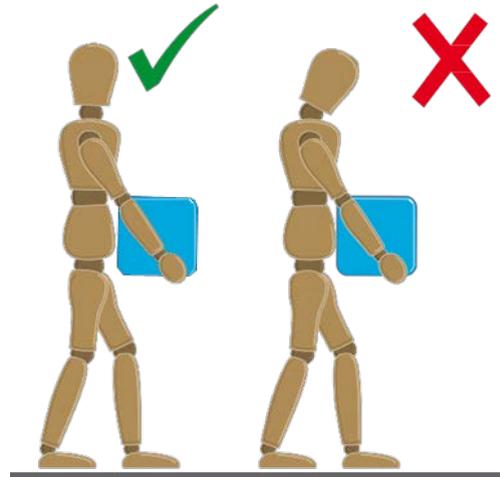


4. **Keep the load close to the waist.** Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.

If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.



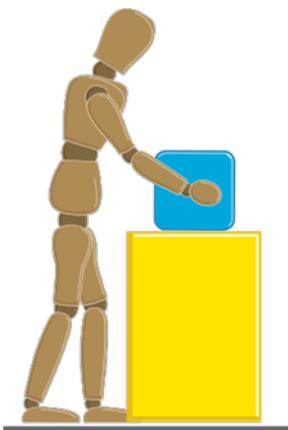
5. **Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways,** especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.



6. **Keep the head up when handling.** Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

Move smoothly. The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed. There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.



7. **Put down, then adjust.** If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first and then slide it into the desired position.

Good handling technique for pushing and pulling

Here are some practical points to remember when loads are pushed or pulled.

Handling devices

Aids such as barrows and trolleys should have handle heights that are between the shoulder and waist. Devices should be well maintained with wheels that run smoothly. The law requires that equipment is maintained. Ensure new trolleys etc., are good quality with large diameter wheels made of suitable material and with castors, bearings etc. which will last with minimum maintenance.

Force

As a rough guide the amount of force that needs to be applied to move a load over a flat, level surface using a well-maintained handling aid is at least 2% of the load weight. For example, if the load weight is 400 kg, then the force needed to move the load is 8 kg. The force needed will be larger, perhaps a lot larger, if conditions are not perfect (e.g. wheels not in the right position or a device that is poorly maintained). The person moving a load should try to push rather than pull, provided they can see over it and control steering and stopping.

Slopes

The person moving a load should get help from someone else whenever necessary, if they have to negotiate a slope or ramp, as pushing and pulling forces can be very high. For example, if a load of 400 kg is moved up a slope of 1 in 12 (about 5°), the required force is over 30 kg even in ideal conditions with good wheels and a smooth slope. This is above the guideline weight for men and well above the guideline weight for women.

Uneven surfaces

Moving an object over soft or uneven surfaces requires higher forces. On an uneven surface, the force needed to start the load moving could increase to 10% of the load weight, although this might be offset to some extent by using larger wheels. Soft ground may be even worse.

Stance and pace

To make it easier to push or pull, employees should keep their feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed. This will stop them becoming too tired too quickly.

Section B: More Detailed Assessment – Where necessary

Questions to consider	If YES, mark as appropriate				Problems occurring from the task (Make rough notes in this column in preparation for the possible remedial action to be taken).	Possible Remedial Action (Possible changes to be made to system/task, load, workplace/space, and environment. Communication that is needed).
	Low	Medium	High	Extreme		
<p>The Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding away from the body? <input type="checkbox"/> • Twisting? <input type="checkbox"/> • Stooping? <input type="checkbox"/> • Reaching upwards? <input type="checkbox"/> • Large vertical movement? <input type="checkbox"/> • Long carrying distances? <input type="checkbox"/> • Strenuous pushing/pulling? <input type="checkbox"/> • Unpredictable movement of loads? <input type="checkbox"/> • Repetitive handling? <input type="checkbox"/> • Insufficient rest or recovery? <input type="checkbox"/> • A work rate imposed by a process? <input type="checkbox"/> 						

<p>The Loads: are they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy? <input type="checkbox"/> • Bulky/unwieldy? <input type="checkbox"/> • Difficult to grasp? <input type="checkbox"/> • Unstable/unpredictable? <input type="checkbox"/> • Intrinsically harmful (e.g. sharp or hot)? <input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<p>The working Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constraints on posture? <input type="checkbox"/> • Poor floors? <input type="checkbox"/> • Variations in levels? <input type="checkbox"/> • Hot/cold/humid conditions? <input type="checkbox"/> • Strong air movements? <input type="checkbox"/> • Poor lighting conditions? <input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<p>Individual Capability - Does the job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require unusual capability? <input type="checkbox"/> • Hazard to those with a health problem? <input type="checkbox"/> • Hazard to those who are pregnant? <input type="checkbox"/> • Call for special <input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

information/training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
• Other factors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

OVERALL RISK (Based on Likelihood X Severity)						
		SEVERITY INDEX				
		1	2	3	4	5
LIKELIHOOD	5	5-MED	10-MED	15-HIGH	20-HIGH	25-EXTREME
	4	4-LOW	8-MED	12-HIGH	16-HIGH	20-HIGH
	3	3-LOW	6-MED	9-MED	12-HIGH	15-HIGH
	2	2-LOW	4-LOW	6-MED	8-MED	10-MED
	1	1-LOW	2-LOW	3-LOW	4-LOW	5-MED

OVERALL RISK	DESCRIPTION
1-4 LOW	Low risks are largely acceptable, monitor periodically to determine situation changes which may affect the risk, or after significant changes
5-10 MEDIUM	Medium risks should only be tolerated for the short-term and then only whilst further control measures to mitigate the risk are being planned and introduced, within a defined time period.
12-20 HIGH	High risks activities should cease immediately until further control measures to mitigate the risk are introduced. The continued effectiveness of control measures must be monitored periodically.
25 EXTREME	Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been mitigated. Immediate action is required to reduce exposure. A detailed mitigation plan must be developed, implemented and monitored by senior management to reduce the risk before work is allowed to commence

Section C: Remedial Action – Where necessary

Remedial steps to be taken, in order of priority (extreme/high/med/low)		Person responsible for implementing controls	Target date	Completed Y/N
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
Date by which actions should be completed:				
Date for review of assessment:				
Assessor's name:		Signature:		

Appendix 5: Typical manual handling problems and ways of reducing the risk

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p>The tasks, do they involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holding loads away from the body? ▪ Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? ▪ Large vertical movement? ▪ Long carrying distances? ▪ Strenuous pushing or pulling? ▪ Repetitive handling? ▪ Insufficient rest or recovery time? ▪ A work rate imposed by a process? 	<p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a lifting aid? ▪ Improve workplace layout to improve efficiency? ▪ Reduce the amount of twisting and stooping? ▪ Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads? ▪ Reduce carrying distances? ▪ Avoid repetitive handling? ▪ Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used? ▪ Push rather than pull?
<p>The loads, are they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heavy or bulky? ▪ Difficult to grasp? ▪ Unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)? ▪ Harmful, eg sharp or hot? ▪ Awkwardly stacked? ▪ Too large for the handler to see over? 	<p>Can you make the load:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighter or less bulky? ▪ Easier to grasp? ▪ More stable? ▪ Evenly stacked? ▪ If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg by providing handles or smaller packages?
<p>The working environment, are there:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restrictions on posture? ▪ Bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? ▪ Variations in floor levels? ▪ Hot/cold/humid conditions? ▪ Gusts of wind or other strong air movements? ▪ Poor lighting conditions? ▪ Restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? 	<p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove obstructions to free movement? ▪ Provide better flooring? ▪ Avoid steps and steep ramps? ▪ Prevent extremes of hot and cold? ▪ Improve lighting? ▪ Provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? ▪ Ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for their work?
<p>Individual capacity, does the job:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require unusual capability, eg above average strength or agility? ▪ endanger those with a health problem or learning/ ▪ Physical disability? ▪ Endanger pregnant women? ▪ Call for special information or training? 	<p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness? ▪ Take extra care of pregnant workers? give your employees more information, eg about ▪ The range of tasks they are likely to face? ▪ Provide more training (see 'What about training?') ▪ Get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to?

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p>Handling aids and equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the device the correct type for the job? ▪ Is it well maintained? ▪ Are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface? ▪ Do the wheels run freely? ▪ Is the handle height between the waist and shoulders? ▪ Are the handle grips in good condition and comfortable? ▪ Are there any brakes? If so, do they work? 	<p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjust the work rate? ▪ Provide equipment that is more suitable for the task? ▪ Carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems? ▪ Change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily? ▪ Provide better handles and handle grips? ▪ Make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?
<p>Work organisation factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the work repetitive or boring? ▪ Is work machine or system-paced? ▪ Do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive? ▪ Have workers little control of the work and working methods? ▪ Is there poor communication between managers and employees? 	<p>Can you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change tasks to reduce the monotony? ▪ Make more use of workers' skills? ▪ Make workloads and deadlines more achievable? ▪ Encourage good communication and teamwork? ▪ Involve workers in decisions? ▪ Provide better training and information?