Manual Handling Guidelines

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Forms:

- Manual Handling Register (72KB)
- Hazardous Manual Handling Identification Worksheet (91KB)
- WorkSafe Manual Handling Worksheet (343KB)
- Manual Handling Job Analysis Worksheet (71KB)
- Manual Handling Risk Control Prompt (125KB)
- Manual Handling Risks and Control Measures (41KB)
- Manual Handling Risk Management Worksheet (68KB)
- Safe Working Method Statement (38KB)
- Manual Handling Training Record (35KB)

1. What is Manual Handling

Manual handling is much more than lifting or lowering an object. It also includes restraining, pulling, carrying, holding, throwing and activities involving sustained (awkward) posture, repetitive actions and use of equipment or tools that have a vibration component. Manual handling also includes keyboard work.

"Musculoskeletal disorder" (MSD) means an injury, illness or disease that arises in whole or in part from manual handling in the workplace, whether occurring suddenly or over a prolonged period of time, but does not include an injury, illness or disease which is caused by crushing, entrapment or cut resulting primarily from the mechanical operation of plant.

2. Minimum Compliance Requirements

To comply with the Manual Handling Regulations under the OHS Act, managers must:

Requirements
1. Identify all manual handling tasks in your area
2. Create a register of manual handling tasks
3. Identify hazardous manual handling tasks
4. Conduct a risk assessment on each hazardous manual handling tasks
5. Develop and review risk control measures using the Hierarchy of Control
6. Ensure that staff, supervisors, students, contractors have received sufficient information, instruction and training.
7. Ensure staff, supervisors, students, contractors can demonstrate competencies with regard to manual handling.
8. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of control measures.

Notes

- The hazard identification, risk assessment and control process should be undertaken in consultation with staff and the relevant Health and Safety Representative (HSR).
- Each step in the process must be documented.

3. Recommended Compliance Procedure

Methodology	Resources / Tools
Step 1: Obtain a copy of the Code of Practice (CoP) for Manual Handling.	Download a copy from WorkSafe.
Step 2: Identify all manual handling tasks that are done regularly. Regularly = at least once a week.	Manual Handling Register.
Step 3: Identify in consultation with staff and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) those tasks that are potentially hazardous.	Hazardous Manual Handling Identification Worksheet.
Step 4: Decide how the manual handling assessments will be carried out. Assessments should be carried out in consultation with staff and HSRs.	Options: • Assign to a local supervisor • Appoint manual handling officer • Use an expert or consultant to carry out • Put together a risk assessment team.
Step 5: If a large number of assessments need to be carried out, draw up a schedule or plan with responsibilities and target dates.	Record on faculty/division Health and Safety Plan.
Step 6: Assess and document the risk arising from each identified hazardous manual handling task. Risk factors include: Postures Duration Movements Frequency Forces Environment	Options for analysing and recording risks: • Use the WorkSafe Manual Handling Worksheet • Use Manual Handling Job Analysis Worksheet • Develop local assessment worksheet.
Step 7: Work through control measures using the Hierarchy of Control to identify and prioritise control measures.	The Manual Handling Risk Control Prompt and Manual Handling Risks and Control Measures can be used to generate ideas on possible control measures. Options for analysing and recording controls: • Use the WorkSafe Manual Handling Worksheet • Use Manual Handling Risk Management Worksheet to record identified risks and control measures.
Step 8: Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of control measures.	Develop a review plan to ensure control measures are being implemented and working as expected.
Step 9: If the work still involves hazardous materials handling, then a Safe Working Method Statement must be developed for the task.	Safe Working Method Statement. The statement should include all risks involved in the task.
Step 10: Train staff and supervisors so that they have an appreciation of the hazards involved and why the controls are necessary. Evaluate competency of staff. Ensure refresher and induction training is also provided.	Training Record. Records must be kept five years.

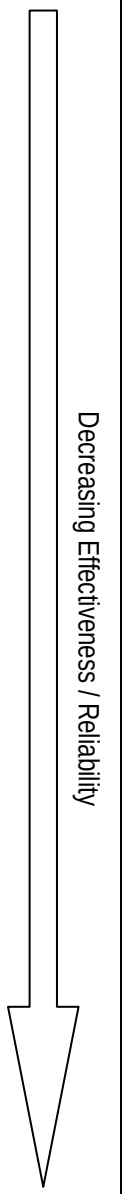
Methodology	Resources / Tools
Step 11: Carry out regular reviews of risk control measures.	• to monitor implementation • to ensure their effectiveness • when there are changes to materials or procedures • at least every 5 years.

4. Risk Controls

(see also Manual Handling Risk Control Prompt and Manual Handling Risks and Control Measures)

The Regulations set out a ranking of risk controls (Hierarchy of Controls). Firstly you will need to consider whether the risk can be completely eliminated. If not, then you have to consider risk reduction. Only after risk reduction proves not to be practicable can you consider manual handling training as a control measure. In reality a manual handling problem will be resolved by a mixture of controls that may include manual handling training.

Safety Measure (in order of hierarchy)	Explanation and Examples	
Elimination	Eliminate the task. Example: • automate the process to remove manual handling	
Workplace Layout	• Eliminate or reduce bending movements and postures • Eliminate or reduce twisting movements and postures • Eliminate or reduce reaching movements and postures • Eliminate or reduce pushing, pulling and carrying movements and forces • Eliminate or reduce holding and carrying movements and forces	
Workstation Design	• Eliminate or reduce awkward postures by optimising working position	
Environmental Conditions	• Eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration • Manage working in heat or high humidity • Manage working in cold • Use adequate and appropriate lighting levels • Maintain a tidy, obstacle free workplace	
Systems of Work	• Job designs that optimise working positions and arrangements • Managing the pace and flow of work • Job rotation • Shift arrangements	
Objects used in the Task	• Modify the load being handled • Modify tools and equipment being used	
Mechanical Aids	• Can mechanicals aids be provided to assist	
Training	Information, training and instruction of employees in manual handling techniques must not be used as the sole or primary means to control the risk of injury. You can only use information, training and instruction as the main way to control risk if you can show that it's not practicable to control the risk by altering your workplace, the systems of work or the objects used in the task, or by providing mechanical aids. • Training in manual handling techniques, or how to perform a task properly, can be an important way to help reduce risk. The technique must be specific, designed for the task and the workplace where it will be used. • See also Safe Lifting Technique	
Supervision	• Set the level of supervision in light of the risk and the skills of the persons carrying out the work	



5. Manual Handling Officer

The dean, head of school or director should nominate a Manual Handling Officer where a faculty, school or division (department) is required to do over 20 manual handling assessments.

The Manual Handling Officer coordinates the faculty, school or divisional compliance program. The Manual Handling Officer is responsible for:

- advising the department manager concerning local compliance with legislation
- providing managers, staff, students and others with advice and training on manual handling
- ensuring that when supervisors notify them of hazardous manual handling tasks, those tasks are entered on the register
- maintaining and regularly updating the faculty/division's register(s) of hazardous manual handling tasks
- ensuring that each hazardous manual handling task has a current risk assessment that must be maintained for 5 years
- the investigation together with local supervisor and OHS representative of any incidents involving manual handling.

6. Safe Lifting Technique

Where manual handling involves lifting there are a number of recommendations that constitute safe lifting technique.

- Plan the lift and ensure the path is safe and clear and where it will be placed
- Assess the load and determine how it will be handled. Watch for sharp edges
- Take a balanced stance, feet shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly forward of the other
- Squat down to lift, get as close as you can. Bend your knees and minimise bending your back to get down to the load.
- Get a secure grip, hug the load.
- Lift gradually using your legs, keep the load close to you, keep back and neck straight
- Lift efficiently and rhythmically, minimising bending of the lower back.
- Once standing, change directions by pointing your feet and turn your whole body. Avoid twisting at your waist.
- Walk forward.
- Make sure you can see past the load.
- If you need to carry a load down steps, make sure you can see where you are placing your feet.
- To put load down, use these guidelines in reverse.

Don'ts

- If you twist your back when it is bent, you will greatly increase your risk of injury
- If you cannot see properly do not carry the load
- Many injuries are caused by people trying to re-grasp a slipping load.
- Many injuries are caused by people trying to recover a falling load.
- If a load is slipping or falling, get your feet out of the road and let it fall.
- If the object will not slide easily on carpet or is too heavy to tip, it is too heavy to lift.

7. Design and Purchase Requirements

Where new plant, equipment or systems are being purchased or designed, the responsible manager must ensure that manual handling risks are considered. Managers must:

- Ensure such systems or equipment meet appropriate Australian design standards
- Ensure that the final use of the system or equipment is consistent with the intended use. Where systems or equipment are modified by the University or used for purposes not intended by the manufacturer/supplier, a manual handling risk assessment must be carried out.
- Consider, in general the manual handling implications of the new equipment or systems
- Consult with and involve the relevant staff or their health and safety representatives

Where new systems or equipment is purchased through a contract manager or purchasing officer, the relevant operational manager is still responsible for ensuring the above requirements are met.

Where the University is supplying systems or equipment to other organisations, the responsible manager must ensure all statutory requirements are being met. This involves:

- Identifying relevant standards or industry guidelines
- Testing the equipment or systems against those standards
- Carrying out necessary manual handling and plant risk assessments
- Providing on supply adequate information regarding any associated hazards and safe use.

8. Training and Induction

The induction, information and training provided must include the following:

- understand the Manual Handling Regulations and guidance note
- understand the significance of manual handling accidents and early reporting of injury
- receive an understanding of anatomy and back pain
- have an understanding of manual handling assessment based on the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability
- understand the hierarchy of measures to avoid manual handling injuries
- awareness of local procedures for manual handling and available mechanical aids
- understand the good lifting and carrying techniques including assessing and planning the lift

This training must be provided to staff, students, contractors or volunteers carrying out potentially hazardous manual handling.

Refresher training is also required.

9. Other Supporting Documents

- WorkSafe Victoria - Manual Handling (Code of Practice No.25, 2000)
- WorkSafe Victoria - Manual Handling
- WorkSafe Victoria - A Guide to Handling Large, Bulky or Awkward Items
- WorkSafe Victoria - Officewise - A guide to health and safety in the office
- Australian Safety and Compensation Council (Commonwealth Government) – Manual Handling