

# Manual Handling Risk Guide



Safe manual handling ► **Smart Move**



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## INTRODUCTION

Manual handling injuries are preventable. This publication is a practical guide for employers, workers and self-employed people to help prevent manual handling injuries in the workplace by implementing systematic, risk management procedures.

It provides information to help manage the risk associated with manual handling. The *Manual handling risk guide* will help you:

- identify tasks that involve manual handling activities
- identify the manual handling risks in those activities
- assess how dangerous the risks are
- eliminate or control those risks.

Legal responsibilities for occupational health and safety (OHS) are outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* (the Act) and manual handling responsibilities are outlined in clauses 79 to 81 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001* (the Regulation).

Other obligations are outlined under the *Workers Compensation Act 1987* and the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1988*.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide includes information and tools to measure your occupational health and safety performance relating to manual handling. To improve your manual handling outcomes use the worksheets and this step by step process.



## STEP BY STEP

1. Using the information contained in the guide complete the *Self assessment tool* to measure what steps you have taken to manage manual handling and what you can do to improve.
2. Use the *Manual handling task analysis worksheet* to list work tasks and determine if they include manual handling risks.
3. Record identified manual handling hazards using the *Manual handling hazard identification worksheet*.
4. Assess your manual handling risks using the *Risk assessment worksheet* and the *Manual handling risk factors table*.
5. Use the *Manual handling risk control worksheet* to determine your proposed control measures.
6. Use your *Manual handling action plan* to document and track progress of control measures.
7. If your action plan includes the development of safe work procedures use the *Safe work procedures worksheet* to record the new procedures.
8. Complete the *Self assessment tool* again to see how far you have come.

## SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

The self assessment tool will help you measure the steps you have taken to manage manual handling as part of your overall workplace safety system. It covers:

- management commitment
- consultation
- safe work procedures (including hazard identification, risk assessment, risk elimination/control)
- training and supervision
- reporting safety
- workers compensation and return to work.

The self assessment tool is colour coded and will help you check your status on manual handling issues and suggest corrective action that can be taken. After you have completed it, revisit it occasionally to ensure that you are on the right path.

Look at each of the statements and choose the one that best describes the situation in your workplace for each category – then tick the box. Draw a line through the ticks and see how it runs across the colours.

If you are mainly in the red zone, seek advice immediately from WorkCover, or elsewhere about how to implement a system to manage manual handling activities.

If you are mainly in the yellow zone, you are working towards an effective manual handling system. This process should start with workplace consultation and include review and evaluation steps.

If you are mainly in the green zone, you're well on your way to achieving successful management of manual handling risks. In consultation with your workers continue to monitor, maintain and improve systems.

## WHAT IS MANUAL HANDLING?

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures, or repetitive motions.

In NSW, manual handling incidents represent the most common cause of workplace injuries and occupational diseases, accounting for around 37 per cent of all major workers compensation claims.

In both human and financial terms, the cost of manual handling injuries is significant. These costs can include:

- pain, suffering and restricted mobility for injured workers
- reduced quality of life for injured workers and their families
- reduced future earning capacity of injured workers
- lowered workplace morale
- loss of productivity leading to reduced employer profits
- potential increase in workers compensation premiums
- more than \$370 million in workers compensation claims a year
- approximately 17,000 major workers compensation claims a year for manual handling injuries and occupational diseases.

## A SAFER WORKPLACE

Manual handling is just one hazard that arises in the majority of workplaces. It occurs in numerous work activities and is identified as a problem across most industry sectors. It needs to be considered and integrated as part of the overall management of OHS.

To create a safer workplace and ensure that you meet your legal obligations consider:

- **Management commitment:** Clearly define your own responsibilities and those of your workers regarding manual handling tasks. Provide the resources to meet those responsibilities. Get involved in workplace safety.
- **Consultation:** Involve your workers to identify and resolve manual handling issues.
- **Safe work procedures:** Identify the tasks that involve manual handling and may pose a risk to your workers and develop procedures to manage those risks.
- **Training and supervision:** Train your workers in manual handling and ensure the procedures are followed at all times.
- **Reporting safety:** Have a process for reporting manual handling issues, such as hazards and incidents, and ensure you act upon these reports.
- **Workers compensation and return to work:** Ensure your workers are covered by a workers compensation insurance policy. You must also have an injury notification system and a return to work program to assist your injured workers.

It is important to monitor and review all systems and procedures on a regular basis to ensure you are accounting for changes in your workplace.

## MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Everyone agrees that a safe workplace is important but it won't happen if you don't do all you can to make it as safe as it can be. The primary responsibility for a safe workplace rests with you, the employer. Demonstrate your commitment to safety and ensure that everyone in your organisation is clear about their health and safety responsibilities.

Health and safety responsibilities include ensuring that manual handling risks are eliminated or controlled. Develop a safe manual handling culture using risk management and consultation with your workers to address all manual handling issues.

Demonstrate your commitment. Let your actions and attitude send the message to your workers that you are serious about safety. From this commitment, effective partnerships are formed with your workers to achieve a safer workplace.

## Determine manual handling responsibilities

Talk to your workers about what you expect of them regarding manual handling and how you will help them achieve these expectations.

If you expect workers to report manual handling incidents, they need a reporting procedure – and they expect you to act upon the reports. Similarly, if you expect workers to carry out manual handling activities safely, they need safe workplace design, appropriate equipment and safe manual handling procedures. They need to be involved in the development of these procedures and any other relevant issue that may arise.

These expectations are the safety responsibilities of you and your workers.

When responsibilities have been identified, commit adequate resources to ensure these responsibilities are met.

Spend time to:

- discuss manual handling issues, proposed changes and redesign
- design safe systems and workplaces
- develop safe manual handling work procedures
- identify and assess manual handling risks
- determine suitable control measures
- supervise and train your workers
- act on reports.

Spend money to:

- purchase appropriate equipment
- design/redesign or modify workplace layout
- maintain and repair equipment
- fix manual handling problems
- provide personal protective equipment (PPE).

## Make manual handling a priority

When you have identified safety responsibilities and have committed resources to make your workplace safe, take the initiative to make safety a top priority.

Elements of your safety management approach with regard to manual handling should include:

- providing safe systems of work, workplaces and appropriate equipment for manual handling
- providing resources to address your safety responsibilities
- involving your workers in decisions about their health and safety including manual handling issues
- developing and implementing safe work procedures for all manual handling tasks that expose your workers to risk
- training your workers to do their jobs safely
- ensuring risk assessments cover the range of manual handling risk factors
- ensuring that safe manual handling work procedures are followed at all times
- ensuring manual handling problems are reported quickly – and acted upon
- reviewing procedures when there are changes in the workplace or after an incident
- ensuring your workers compensation insurance policy is accurate and up to date and your return to work program is prominently displayed in the workplace.

## CONSULTATION

As well as being a good idea, consultation about safety issues is required under the Act.

Your workers are directly affected by your decisions and can often see things that you may overlook. They can provide suggestions about how to solve manual handling problems and reduce injuries that can lead to increased savings and improved productivity for your business.

For example, alterations to the workplace or work tasks can create manual handling risks. Your workers can help you identify and assess these risks and decide what to do to eliminate or control them. Avoid unnecessary expense and downtime by including staff in achieving outcomes.

Consultation enables you to share information about manual handling issues and get your workers' views before you make decisions. You and your workers must be alert to things that can cause harm. Through consultation you become more aware of hazards and manual handling issues experienced by your workers, allowing you to address potential problems before they escalate and affect your business.

## Determine consultation arrangements

You must consult your workers about health and safety matters.

If you have 20 or more workers and the majority want a committee – or if WorkCover NSW (or you) direct it – you must establish an OHS committee. If a committee is not requested by the majority of your workers, elect one or more OHS representatives or make other arrangements as agreed to by your workers.

Your consultation arrangements must be agreed to by your workers and should consider the diversity and structure of your workplace eg shiftwork, remote workers, trainees and apprentices, workers with a disability and other issues such as language, literacy, gender and age.

All hazards and associated risks, including manual handling, should be discussed through your agreed consultation arrangements.

## Record consultation arrangements

Your agreed consultation arrangements must be recorded and displayed in the workplace. Include the names, roles and contact details of all those who have specific OHS responsibilities. Let them know they might be contacted to discuss OHS issues.

## Consult effectively

Use your consultation arrangements to tell your workers about plans you may have that could affect their health and safety eg redesigning the workplace, purchasing new equipment, changing work tasks. Before making a decision, encourage your workers to raise concerns and allow time for adequate feedback to take place. Make an extra effort to include vulnerable workers eg young workers, those with a disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

When discussing manual handling issues with your workers, try to reach an agreement. However, responsibility for safety ultimately rests with you.

Keep records of your safety decisions to demonstrate that you take manual handling issues seriously, and that you are prompt in addressing them. Keeping records reinforces the actions required, outlines who is responsible for undertaking them, and when they need to be completed.



## SAFE WORK PROCEDURES

Sometimes, manual handling risks associated with a work task are obvious eg lifting and carrying excessive loads or performing repetitive tasks in awkward positions. For other tasks, the risks aren't as obvious eg packing and unpacking goods or sitting in one position for a long time. Also many work procedures use hazardous materials or equipment that may cause you to overlook the manual handling risks of the procedure.

Safe work procedures ensure your workers are aware of all risks associated with work tasks and outline how to avoid injury or illness while doing these tasks.

### Analyse tasks

Task analysis involves breaking down a job into its component tasks. Determining the percentage of shift time each task takes could enhance the analysis. For complex jobs with numerous tasks, an external expert, such as an ergonomist, can be engaged to assist.

There are different ways to approach task analysis. Smaller organisations can begin by examining the various levels of their organisation and describing the activities that workers perform at each level. Larger organisations may prefer to examine the trades and occupations that exist in the organisation and outline the tasks each performs.

Regardless of the size of your organisation or the jobs that your workers undertake, manual handling hazards are usually present. Task analysis helps uncover the range of hazards, including manual handling hazards, which may result in injury or illness to your workers. Analyse all tasks conducted at your workplace using the appropriate *Manual handling task analysis worksheet* (page 16). It is an ideal starting point for hazard identification and risk assessment.

## Identify the manual handling hazards

Once the tasks have been determined, identify the hazards associated with each task. When identifying manual handling hazards in the workplace:

- involve your workers by:
  - talking to your workers who are experienced in performing the tasks
  - asking workers for their views on how to fix the problem
  - seeking external opinions on problems specific to your industry
- consider past experience and information, such as:
  - the register of injuries and hazard reports
  - the range of musculoskeletal injuries or diseases, including occupational overuse syndrome
  - workers compensation and industry records
- observe:
  - how the workplace and workflows are designed
  - how and where equipment is used
  - how tools, materials and equipment are stored and accessed
  - tasks that require awkward postures, movements and actions that are forceful or repetitive
  - how workers perform their tasks
  - how workers might potentially be injured
- record:
  - a complete list of manual handling hazards
  - solutions that have been implemented
- review:
  - your workplace and work procedures on a regular basis
  - when you introduce a new product, new staff, new equipment
  - when there is an incident, complaint or suggestion for improvement
  - your actions and strive for further improvements

By law, you must identify hazards before using your workplace or equipment for the first time, before or during changes to plant and work practices, while work is being conducted, and when relevant information becomes available.

Record identified manual handling hazards for each task using the *Manual handling hazard identification worksheet* (page 20).



## Assess the manual handling risks

Having identified the hazards associated with various tasks at your workplace, determine the importance of each risk by taking the following steps.

1. Talk to your workers about the significance of the identified hazards.
2. Determine what controls are in place and whether they are working.
3. Prioritise the problems according to the level of risk.
4. Address the hazards with the highest risk of injury first.
5. Refer to relevant information including risk assessments from designer, manufacturers, suppliers and those who hire or lease plant.
6. Consider the potential risk to others at your workplace.

When assessing manual handling risks consider:

- actions and movements (including repetitive movements)
- workplace and workstation layout
- working posture and position
- duration and frequency of manual handling
- load location and distances moved
- weights and forces
- characteristics of loads and equipment
- work organisation
- work environment
- age
- skills and experience
- clothing
- special needs of workers
- other factors relevant to the task or situation when manual handling arises.

Assess your manual handling risks, by using the *Manual handling risk assessment worksheet* (page 22). The *Manual handling risk factors table* (page 12) provides further information to help you assess the risk.

## Eliminate or control manual handling risks

If the risk assessment shows that there is a risk of injury, eliminate or control it. Consult with those performing the tasks and their representatives. Seek advice from experts. Talk to industry associations, unions and other relevant sources. Consider the risks for both workers and others who are legally in the workplace.

Eliminating hazards is the most effective way to make the workplace safer. Ensure that objects and work practices are designed to eliminate risk and that the working environment is designed to be consistent with the safe handling of objects.

If you can't eliminate the hazard - control it. To minimise the risk to the lowest level reasonably practical, you must:

- substitute the hazard with a hazard that gives rise to lesser risk eg use 20 kg bags of cement instead of 40 kg bags
- isolate the hazard from the person put at risk eg use remote-handling techniques
- minimise the risk by engineering means eg provide adjustable workstations to avoid unnecessary reaching or bending
- minimise the risk by administrative means eg introduce job rotation, implement a safe lifting policy, provide appropriate training
- provide PPE eg non-slip footwear to prevent slips, trips and falls while performing manual handling activities.

If no single measure can control the risk, use a combination of measures.

The OHS Regulation also imposes specific risk control measures for manual handling. If it is not reasonably practical to eliminate a risk arising from manual handling, you must design the work activity to control the risk and, if necessary you must:

- modify the design of the objects to be handled or the work environment (to the extent that it is under your control), taking into account work design and work practices
- provide mechanical aids or make arrangements for team lifting, or both
- ensure that the people carrying out the activity are trained in manual handling techniques, correct use of mechanical aids and team-lifting procedures appropriate to the activity.

If practical, you must achieve risk control by ways other than team lifting.

Use the *Manual handling risk control worksheet* (page 24) and the *Manual handling action plan* (page 26) to document your proposed control measures. Ensure your safe work procedures (see *Manual handling safe work procedure worksheet* on page 27) are developed or updated to reflect agreed changes and ensure your workers are informed or trained appropriately.

## Monitor and review

Having eliminated or controlled the risks identified for your work tasks and included them in your safe work procedures, you should also:

- stay on the lookout to anticipate new hazards
- check that solutions are appropriate and have not created new problems
- talk to your workers regularly
- check the register of injuries and reports
- promote health and safety
- strive for improvement and update work procedures regularly
- use your action plan.

You must review your risk assessments and any measures adopted to control the risk, whenever:

- there is evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid eg due to changes in technology or knowledge or from incident investigations and reports
- an illness or injury results from exposure to the hazard.

To help keep track of manual handling improvements, report progress on your *Manual handling action plan*.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training is important to ensure that your workers undertake manual handling tasks safely. Provide effective training, on-the-job instruction and adequate supervision and workers will become aware of safety issues and perform their jobs competently, consistently and safely.

NSW legislation requires you to provide your workers with any information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure their health and safety at work.

### Establish a safety induction process

Manual handling is a specific hazard that requires special training and information in the policies and procedures that you have established to manage safety in your organisation. Prior to this detailed training, new workers should receive induction training that includes information about:

- health and safety responsibilities
- how consultation takes place
- reporting hazards, incidents and injuries
- general safety rules and policies, such as following safe work procedures, using PPE, prevention of bullying, drugs and alcohol
- training and information requirements for specific tasks, such as safe work procedures, material safety data sheets and operators' manuals
- emergency procedures
- the return to work program and workers compensation.

Review your induction training program periodically to ensure that it is up to date and effective. Where appropriate, provide the information in a training manual and distribute it to your workers.

## Provide task or hazard-specific training

Where work tasks or particular hazards pose a risk to the health and safety of your workers, ensure that safe work procedures are prepared and communicated. Training and information helps workers understand why and how a task is done safely.

Inform your workers about the potential safety risks when performing manual handling tasks and then explain how to control the risks. Demonstrate the safe work procedure, step by step. Ensure that each worker carries out the procedure and assess their performance until they are competent to undertake the task without supervision. Provide ongoing or refresher training as required.

## Provide adequate supervision

NSW legislation requires that you provide adequate supervision to ensure the health and safety of your workers. To determine what is adequate supervision consider the level of risk in the job, the skills, experience, competence and age of the worker. Also consider requirements for workers with a disability, cultural differences or language problems.

## Ensure that procedures are followed

When a worker fails to follow safe work procedures such as not using safety equipment or PPE when required, or interfering with safety mechanisms treat it like any other breach of discipline. In the first instance, this may require corrective action, such as counselling and further training. Serious breaches may require discipline.



## Keep training records

NSW legislation requires you to keep training records for such things as consultation training or certain high risk tasks, such as working in confined spaces. It is good business to keep records of induction training of new workers and of training for all your safe work procedures on manual handling. This demonstrates that you are meeting your legal responsibilities.

Training records enable you to keep track of who has been trained, how they performed and what further training is required. Where risk assessments are undertaken, training records may also show that the outcomes have been included into the way work is done.

## REPORTING SAFETY

Reporting procedures help you obtain important information about manual handling issues in the workplace, identify problems when they arise and address them.

Reporting makes it simpler for you and your workers to manage manual handling issues and prevent recurrences of incidents and injuries.

Reporting and investigating incidents and injuries assists you to:

- understand why they occurred
- make decisions and set priorities
- analyse trends in safety issues
- identify hazards and risks that were previously unnoticed
- develop new safe work procedures or prevention strategies.

Involve your workers in the development of reporting procedures by deciding:

- what to report eg faulty equipment, housekeeping issues, injuries, near misses
- how to report eg a written reporting procedure is appropriate for major manual handling issues that pose a serious risk. You'll be better equipped to identify and analyse trends and develop prevention strategies
- who to report to eg nominate someone to have authority to act upon the manual handling reports, such as yourself or a supervisor.

Some manual handling issues can be resolved easily. However, where there is a significant safety issue that cannot be resolved immediately record:

- who made the report
- to whom the report was made
- the date of the report
- the nature of the problem
- the action taken to resolve the problem
- any further action required – what, when and by whom.

## Implement your safety reporting procedure

The success of your safety reporting procedure rests with your workers – they must be keen to use it. Let them know about the procedures you have implemented, ensure that everyone is aware of their health and safety responsibilities, and assure them the reports will be used to improve workplace safety. New workers should be advised of these procedures during their induction training.

## Utilise your safety reports

Your safety reports are an ideal resource to develop and implement safety improvement measures. When incidents or injuries occur, use the safety reports to review and improve your safe work procedures. Review the reports to map trends that may help you identify manual handling problems. Discuss the reports with your workers.

## WORKERS COMPENSATION AND RETURN TO WORK

If you employ workers, you must have a current workers compensation insurance policy, an injury reporting system and an effective return to work program – they will help to ensure that your workers receive appropriate treatment and benefits, including assistance in returning to their normal duties in the event of a workplace injury or illness.

You are an employer for workers compensation purposes if you are a Pty Ltd company with workers or working directors, a partnership, or a sole trader who employs fulltime, part time or casual workers.

As part of your workers compensation and return to work obligations you must:

- have a current workers compensation insurance policy that covers all workers
- display the WorkCover *Watching out for you* poster in your workplace
- notify WorkCover NSW and/or your Scheme Agent of any workplace incidents
- establish a return to work program that is consistent with your Scheme Agent's injury management program
- make a suitable duties available to your injured workers
- keep a record of your wages for the past seven years
- keep a register of workplace related injuries and illnesses
- forward any workers compensation payments to your injured workers
- not dismiss an injured worker because of their injury within six months of the injury or illness occurring and the injured workers incapacity to work.

## Where do I obtain a workers compensation insurance policy?

In NSW, workers compensation insurance claims and policy services are offered to workers and employers by seven organisations known as Scheme Agents. Their contact details can be found at [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au).

## How do I obtain a workers compensation insurance policy?

Contact one of the Scheme Agents for assistance. You will need to provide:

- your registered business name
- your registered business address
- your workplace address (if different)
- your ACN and/or ABN
- a description of your business
- an estimate of payments to contractors.

## What is a return to work program?

A return to work program is a formal policy and procedure that you must have in place to help your injured workers with their recovery and return to the workplace. It outlines your commitment to assist injured workers with accessing necessary treatment and rehabilitation, and specifies the steps to be taken to achieve a safe, timely and durable return to work.

Your return to work program must be consistent with your Scheme Agent's injury management program and must be displayed in your workplace.

You must develop a return to work program within 12 months of becoming an employer and you must provide a copy to your workers upon request.

Your program must be developed in consultation with your workers and any industrial union that represents your workers.



# SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

What statement best describes your approach to manual handling? Tick as many statements as apply.

Management commitment	Consultation	Safe work procedures
<input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling responsibilities are clearly understood and acted upon. <input type="checkbox"/> Time and money is allocated for manual handling responsibilities including design, purchase and maintenance for manual handling. <input type="checkbox"/> Manager/s promote safe manual handling as a high priority and lead by example.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreed consultation arrangements are used to discuss safety issues and are working effectively. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers are involved in manual handling decisions and developing safe work procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers' views on manual handling are valued and taken into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> All tasks are analysed and manual handling hazards are identified routinely when necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessment is undertaken for all manual handling tasks and all risk factors are taken into account. <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling risks are eliminated or controlled. <input type="checkbox"/> Safe work procedures are developed and implemented for tasks involving manual handling. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers are involved in developing and reviewing safe manual handling procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures are followed in day to day operations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling responsibilities are identified but not understood or operating effectively. <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient time and money are allocated to meet manual handling responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling is not always a priority and manager/s do not always lead by example.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consultation arrangements are in place but not working effectively. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers are not always involved in manual handling decisions and developing safe work procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers' views on manual handling are not always valued or taken into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only some tasks or manual handling hazards are analysed/identified. <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessment is undertaken for some tasks involving manual handling and only some risk factors are taken into account. <input type="checkbox"/> Some manual handling risks are eliminated or controlled. <input type="checkbox"/> Limited development and implementation of safe work procedures involving manual handling. <input type="checkbox"/> Limited involvement of workers in developing safe manual handling procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures aren't always followed in day to day operations. <input type="checkbox"/> Safe manual handling procedures are not reviewed.
<input type="checkbox"/> No clear understanding of manual handling responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> No time or money is allocated to meet manual handling responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling is not a priority and managers set a poor example.	<input type="checkbox"/> No consultation arrangements are in place. <input type="checkbox"/> No involvement of workers in manual handling issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers' views are not valued or taken into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tasks with manual handling safety risks are not identified/analysed. <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling risks are not assessed/controlled. <input type="checkbox"/> No safe manual handling procedures are developed. <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility for manual handling is left to workers.

Training and supervision	Reporting safety	Workers compensation and return to work	Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All workers are inducted.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All workers are trained in risk management and safe manual handling work procedures before commencing tasks.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers understand procedures and demonstrate safe manual handling.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are supervised to ensure safe work procedures for manual handling are followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Procedures for reporting safety issues and incidents are developed and implemented.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety issues and incidents are reported and acted upon, including notifications required to WorkCover.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe work procedures and training are reviewed following incident reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers compensation insurance policy reflects nature of business, number of workers and total wages.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All injuries are reported to your Scheme Agent within 48 hours.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are informed of the return to work program including procedures in the event of an injury or illness.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Return to work plans are implemented for injured workers when required.</li> </ul>	<p>Each tick in the green zone means that you are more likely to be compliant.</p> <p><b>MONITOR AND REVIEW TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Induction and training in risk management and safe manual handling is incomplete or inconsistently applied.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some workers are not able to demonstrate they do the tasks safely.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supervision does not always result in safe manual handling procedures being followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reporting procedures are developed but not always followed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some incidents reported but follow-up action is limited.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe work procedures and training are not always reviewed following an incident report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers compensation insurance policy does not accurately reflect nature of business, number of workers and total wages.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not all injuries are reported to your Scheme Agent within 48 hours.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are not aware of the return to work program including procedures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Return to work plans are not effective in getting injured workers to return to work.</li> </ul>	<p>Each tick in the orange zone means you are increasing your level of compliance.</p> <p><b>BUT YOU STILL HAVE WORK TO DO.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are not inducted.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No risk management or manual handling training is provided.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are not made aware of manual handling issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ability of workers to do tasks safely is not checked.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No supervision of manual handling tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No reporting procedures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incidents are not reported or acted upon.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No review of work procedures following an incident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No workers compensation insurance policy.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No return to work program or plans.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers are not assisted to return to work after an injury.</li> </ul>	<p>Each tick in the red zone means you are less likely to be compliant.</p> <p><b>ADDRESS THESE AREAS IMMEDIATELY.</b></p>

## MANUAL HANDLING RISK FACTORS TABLE

Look at	Look for	The problem	The solution
Actions and movements (including repetitive actions and movements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bending forward/ sideways</li> <li>• Twisting</li> <li>• Discomfort or pain</li> <li>• Sudden jerky movements</li> <li>• Repetitive bending, twisting or overreaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stress and strain to spine, back muscles and limbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform all movements smoothly, in a controlled, balanced, comfortable position</li> <li>• Minimal repetitive bending, twisting and overreaching movements</li> </ul>
Workplace/ workstation layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaching above shoulder height or below mid thigh</li> <li>• Poor positioning of tools controls, equipment or other materials</li> <li>• Confined working positions or cramped workspace</li> <li>• Objects that limit feet and leg movement and are held away from the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affects the posture and technique, restricts movement and causes muscles to tire</li> <li>• Increases stress on the muscles and the spine</li> <li>• Unbalanced load to the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out most work at waist level, within easy reach</li> <li>• Position tools, controls, equipment and furniture to allow work to be done in a comfortable, upright position</li> <li>• Hold loads close to body</li> </ul>
Working posture and position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks performed in one position for a long time</li> <li>• Repetitive or frequent tasks performed in an uncomfortable position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tires the muscles even if no load is involved</li> <li>• Repetitive or frequent bent or twisted posture increases load on the back`</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform variety of work tasks during the day or take regular breaks</li> <li>• Carry out work in a comfortable position with regular changes in position and posture</li> </ul>
Load location and distances moved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loads moved a long distance or putting loads in specified or difficult locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress on muscles increases risk of injury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store loads at an approximate height in close proximity to where they will be used</li> <li>• Provide adequate space to facilitate ease of loading</li> </ul>
Duration and frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive tasks performed for long periods, or at high speed, without a break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscle fatigue increases risk of injury</li> <li>• Psychological impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a variety of work tasks during the day or take regular breaks</li> </ul>

Look at	Look for	The problem	The solution
Weights and forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the weight of the load in relation to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- actions and movements</li> <li>- working posture and position when lifting</li> <li>- duration and frequency of manual handling</li> <li>- location of loads and distances moved</li> <li>- characteristics of load</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Situations when:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- holding or restraining does not result in movement</li> <li>- pushing levers or pulling objects, where the force may not relate to the movement eg a large force required to move a lever a short distance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The heavier the load, the greater the stress on the spine and muscles</li> <li>• When a person is seated there is extra stress when they apply force or lift loads</li> <li>• Posture and working conditions affect the risk associated with applying a force to push, pull or restrain an object.</li> <li>• Even light loads present a problem if they are lifted incorrectly, repetitively, at speed, or in an unsafe environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide loads that are light and easy to handle</li> <li>• Use mechanical aids or team lifting for heavy loads</li> <li>• Change posture and working conditions as necessary</li> <li>• The risk of injury may increase when:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lifting weights of more than 4.5kg while seated</li> <li>- lifting weights more than 16-20kg</li> <li>- pushing, pulling and sliding objects that are difficult to move</li> <li>- generally weights over 55kg should not be lifted although any weight can be hazardous in certain circumstances</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Characteristics of loads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loads that are difficult to hold eg awkward shapes, slippery surface or obscure vision</li> <li>• Unpredictable or animate objects eg people, animals or unstable loads</li> <li>• Hot or cold loads that can't be held close to the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stumbling with a load can strain the spine and back muscles</li> <li>• Holding a load away from the body increases stress on the back and limbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold loads close to the body</li> <li>• Provide loads that are compact, rigid and predictable preferably with handles</li> <li>• Use mechanical aids, straps or trolleys or team lifting</li> <li>• Use PPE eg gloves for hot, cold or slippery loads (while gloves may protect against burns/abrasions they adversely affect grip, strength and dexterity)</li> <li>• Aprons may allow a load to be held close to the body but may affect mobility and comfort</li> </ul>

Look at	Look for	The problem	The solution
Work organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor work schedule and work procedures</li> <li>• Busy periods without breaks</li> <li>• Inadequate staff numbers</li> <li>• Unsuitable or insufficient mechanical aids</li> <li>• Unnecessary handling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue and stress</li> <li>• Pressure to lift by themselves</li> <li>• Psychological impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unnecessary manual handling</li> <li>• Provide work schedules and work procedures that allow for frequent rest periods and job rotation</li> <li>• Organise work so it flows smoothly</li> <li>• Ensure mechanical aids are available as required</li> <li>• Train in safe team lifting procedures and use only where other means are not available</li> </ul>
Work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slippery or uneven floors and rough ground</li> <li>• Cluttered, confined workspaces</li> <li>• Vibrating machinery</li> <li>• Inadequate lighting</li> <li>• Hot and cold environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slips and falls</li> <li>• Damage to spine and limbs</li> <li>• Back and limb pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide even, slip-resistant floors</li> <li>• Provide an uncluttered, well lit workplace</li> <li>• Provide vibration free machinery or limit exposure to vibration</li> </ul>
Skills and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate training or inexperienced staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of injury is increased if safe work procedures are unknown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all workers in the safest way to perform each task</li> <li>• Ensure workers understand how to care for their bodies</li> </ul>
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers under 18 years of age, or older workers, performing manual handling tasks</li> <li>• Consider the individual's fitness and physical suitability for the task – not only their age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older workers may be less able to cope with certain physical work</li> <li>• Young developing bodies are more easily injured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't assess risk on age alone – older workers may compensate for physical loss with experience and skill</li> <li>• Generally, workers under 18 years should not be required to lift, lower or carry objects weighing more than 16kg without mechanical or other assistance, or without specific training for the task</li> <li>• Consider all relevant risk factors</li> </ul>

Look at	Look for	The problem	The solution
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inappropriate clothing may restrict movement eg tight uniform, slippery shoes, loose gloves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May affect posture and cause slips, trips and falls</li> <li>May affect grip resulting in unplanned or sudden movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proper clothing, footwear and PPE that allows workers to perform tasks with confidence and without restriction</li> </ul>
Special needs (permanent or temporary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers returning from injury or illness, leave or with special needs eg pregnancy, person with a disability, new to the job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People with permanent or temporary physical limitations may require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- time to build their physical capabilities sufficiently to perform the job</li> <li>- changes to the job</li> <li>- changes to the workplace</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take into account permanent or temporary special needs when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- designing the workplace</li> <li>- allocating work</li> <li>- developing procedures</li> <li>- developing suitable duties and the return to work plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Any other factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any other considerations unique to the workplace, task or worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be difficult to address unique or unusual situational factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include in risk assessment even if not always applicable</li> </ul>





## MANUAL HANDLING TASK ANALYSIS WORKSHEET (SMALL BUSINESS) EXAMPLE

List each role or position in your organisation and its major tasks. If there is more than one worker in each role or position, list the tasks once only. If the tasks are different, list them separately. For each task determine whether it involves manual handling. Do not assign any form of priority at this stage.

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, holding, restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures or repetitive motions.

Role or position	Task	Is manual handling involved?
CEO/Owner		
General manager		
Supervisor	Manages day to day operations	N
	Carries out overflow work	Y
	Conducts meetings	N
	Monitors staff performance	N
	Reception and telephone work	Y
	Data processing and computer application	Y
	Talks to staff and conducts training	N
	Oversees operations	N
Workers		
Contractors		



# MANUAL HANDLING TASK ANALYSIS WORKSHEET (LARGE BUSINESS) EXAMPLE

## Trade/occupation: Storeperson

List each major task that is carried out by the storepersons in your organisation. For each task, determine whether it involves manual handling. Do not assign any form of priority at this stage.

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures or repetitive motions.

Task	Is manual handling involved?
Operate forklift	Y
Receive and inspect goods	Y
Undertake transport documentation and pallet control	N
General hand duties	Y
Housekeeping	Y
Consolidate orders to required despatch instructions	N
Stock location and rotation	Y
Basis stocktake duties	Y
Communication with coworkers, other tradespeople and contractors	N
Train new workers in basic stores skills	Y
Data entry for inward/outwards goods	Y

# MANUAL HANDLING HAZARD IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

## Task description and location:

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## Task on this sheet identified from (tick one only):

Incident records       Direct observation of work       Consultation

Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

## Information

1. How many workers do this task? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long do they do it? (duration) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How often do they do it? (frequency) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many workers have reported pain from this task? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many injuries have been attributed to this task? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What risk factors appear to be the main problem(s) with this task?

Actions and movements

Work environment

Workplace and workstation layout

Skills and experience of worker

Working postures/positions

Age of worker

Load location and distances moved

Clothing

Duration and frequency

Special needs of worker

Weights and forces

Other factors (please describe)

Characteristics of loads and equipment

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Work organisation

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7. Are there are other similar tasks?

Yes

No

8. If so, how do we manage them currently?

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9. Does this task require more detailed risk assessment?

Yes, complete the *Manual handling risk assessment worksheet* and *Manual handling risk control worksheet*.

No, copy this for filing and make available for consultation.

Developed by:

Date:

# MANUAL HANDLING HAZARD IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET EXAMPLE

## Task description and location:

*Accept cast metal base deliveries*

*Unload and transfer pallets to storage or paint shop by forklift*

## Task on this sheet identified from (tick one only):

Incident records       Direct observation of work       Consultation

Other, please describe *New process*

## Information

1. How many workers do this task? 1

2. How long do they do it? (duration) 2 hours

3. How often do they do it? (frequency) Twice a week

4. How many workers have reported pain from this task? Nil - new task

5. How many injuries have been attributed to this task? Nil - new task

6. What risk factors appear to be the main problem(s) with this task?

Actions and movements

Work environment

Workplace and workstation layout

Skills and experience of worker

Working postures/positions

Age of worker

Load location and distances moved

Clothing

Duration and frequency

Special needs of worker

Weights and forces

Other factors (please describe)

Characteristics of loads and equipment

Work organisation

7. Are there are other similar tasks?

Yes

No

8. If so, how do we manage them currently?

*Load and unload plastic and glazed components. This procedure requires a trolley, team lifting as required, training for staff doing the job and PPE (gloves and safety boots).*

9. Does this task require more detailed risk assessment?

Yes, complete the *Manual handling risk assessment worksheet* and *Manual handling risk control worksheet*.

No, copy this for filing and make available for consultation.

## Developed by:

B Smith and B Jones (OHS Rep)

## Date:

10 August 2007

# MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

## Task description and location:

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### POSTURES/ACTIONS

#### Actions and movements

- Bending or twisting the back
- Reaching/working above the shoulder
- Reaching/working below mid thigh height
- Sudden or jerky movements
- Repetitive bending, twisting or overreaching

#### Workplace and workstation layout

- Workplace layout makes it hard to reach things involved in the task
- Work heights and/or seat heights unsuitable
- Insufficient space for all necessary movements
- Mechanical aids are not available or easily accessible

#### Working postures and positions

- There is frequent or prolonged forward bending or stretching of the back
- There is frequent or prolonged twisting or sideways bending or stretching

### DURATION/FREQUENCY

- Task is done for a long time by one worker
- A repetitive action is done at speed

### LOAD/FORCE

#### Load location and distances moved

- The object is carried, pushed or pulled over a long distance or unnecessarily handled

#### Weights and forces

- More than 4.5kg lifted while sitting
- More than 16kg is lifted while standing
- Combined with other risk categories:
  - It is necessary to pull, push or slide objects that are difficult to move
  - A large force is applied while seated

#### Characteristics of loads and equipment

- Live loads are manually lifted or moved
- Objects handled are large or have awkward shapes
- Objects are hard to grasp and hold
- Objects are wet, greasy and dirty and cannot be held close to the body eg very hot or cold
- The object blocks the view when handled
- The load is unstable or may move suddenly

## MANAGEMENT/ENVIRONMENT

### Work organisation

- There are busy periods when workers have difficulty keeping up with demands and no rest/recovery breaks
- Workers are not available for team lifting when required
- Manual handling equipment is not regularly maintained or is unsuitable or unavailable

### Work environment

- Floor are slippery or uneven
- There are different floor levels in the work area
- The work area is cluttered or untidy or confined
- Lighting is inadequate for the task
- Work is done in very hot, cold or windy conditions
- There is vibrating machinery

### Clothing

- Protective clothing or equipment is unsuitable or unavailable (eg slippery shoes, loose gloves and clothing that restricts movement)

### Skills and experience

- Workers have not received appropriate training in manual handling
- Workers have not been properly instructed in safe work procedures
- Demands of the task exceed the physical capacity or experience of the workers

### Age

- Workers under 18 performing strenuous repetitive tasks, or lifting objects weighing more than 16kgs
- Older workers performing tasks unsuitable for their physical capabilities

### Special needs

- There are workers at higher risk (eg due to injury, pregnancy, recent illness, new employees or persons with a disability)

## OTHER

- Are there other risk factors not covered by the checklist? Provide details:

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# MANUAL HANDLING RISK CONTROL WORKSHEET

## Elimination

Can the manual handling task be eliminated? For example, redesign work activity, object or working environment.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No

## Substitution

Can the hazard be substituted with one that gives rise to a lesser risk? For example, reduce load size and shape.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No

## Isolation

Can the hazard be isolated from the worker at risk? For example, remote manual handling techniques.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No

## Engineering

Can engineering controls be used? For example, modify equipment or provide mechanical aids.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No

**Administration**

Can administrative controls be used? For example, change work practice, implement job rotation, training, develop/implement safe work procedure.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No

What training or instruction may be required?

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**Personal protective equipment**

What PPE could be used to reduce the risks? For example, use gloves to improve handling of load.

Yes, how can this be done?

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No





## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

WorkCover Assistance Service

**13 10 50**

WorkCover website

**[www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)**

WorkCover publications hotline

**1300 799 003**

NSW legislation

**[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au)**

Australian Standards

**[www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au)**

Australian Safety and Compensation Council

**[www.ascc.gov.au](http://www.ascc.gov.au)**

Human Factors & Ergonomics Society of Australia Inc

**[www.ergonomics.org.au](http://www.ergonomics.org.au)**

You can also obtain information from your employer, industry association or union.



Catalogue Number 1443



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