

Manual Handling Policy

Aim:

As it is not possible to eliminate manual handling altogether, correct handling techniques must be adopted to minimise the risks of injury. A variety of injuries can occur from a result of poor manual handling and staff must be aware and adhere to the company's manual handling policy. It is important to remember lifting and carrying children is different to carrying static loads and therefore manual handling training should reflect this. All staff will receive training in manual handling within their first month of employment and will receive ongoing training as appropriate.

Method:

Preventing Injuries

As with other health and safety issues, the most effective method of prevention is to eliminate the hazard. In this case to remove the need to carry out hazardous manual handling. For example, it may be possible to reorganise the workplace so that items do not need to be moved from one area to another.

However, this is not possible for lifting children. Where manual handling tasks cannot be avoided, they must be assessed as part of the risk assessment. This involves examining the tasks and deciding what the risks associated with them are, and how these can be removed or reduced by adding control measures.

Correct lifting technique

As part of a manual handling assessment the following should be considered:

- The tasks to be carried out
- The load to be moved (remember to think about moving children at this point)
- The environment in which handling takes place
- The capability of the individual involved in the manual handling process

A number of factors increase the risk of manual handling injuries, and these should be considered and controlled. The following points offer suggestions:

Planning and Procedure

- Think about the task to be performed and plan the lift.
- Consider what you will be lifting, where you will put it, how far you are going to move it and how you are going to get it there.
- Never attempt manual handling unless you have read the correct techniques and understood how to use them.
- Ensure that you are capable of undertaking the task – people with health problems and pregnant women may be particularly at risk of injury.
- Assess the size, weight and centre of gravity of the load to ensure that you can maintain a firm grip and see where you are going.
- Remove any unnecessary packaging, if this will make the task safer.
- Assess whether you can lift the load safely without help. If not, get help or use specialist moving equipment e.g. a trolley. Bear in mind that it may be dangerous to attempt to lift some loads.
- If more than one person is involved, plan the lift first and agree who will lead and give instructions.

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- Plan your route and remove obstructions. Check for any hazards such as uneven/slippery flooring.
- Lighting should be adequate.
- Control harmful loads – for instance, by covering sharp edges or by insulating hot containers.
- Check whether you need any personal protective equipment (PPE) and obtain the necessary items, if appropriate. Check the equipment before use and check that it fits you.
- Ensure that you are wearing the correct clothing, avoiding tight clothing and unsuitable footwear.
- Consider a resting point before moving a heavy load or carrying something any distance.

Carrying children

- If the child is old enough, ask them to move to a position that is easy to pick up, and ask them to hold onto you as this will support you and the child when lifting.
- Do not place the child on your hip, carry them directly in front of you in order to balance their weight evenly.
- Wherever possible, avoid carrying the child a long distance.
- Where a child is young and is unable to hold onto you, ensure you support them fully with your arms.
- Avoid carrying anything else when carrying a child. Make 2 journeys or ask a colleague to help you.
- If a child is struggling or fidgeting whilst you are carrying them, stop, place them back down and use reassuring words to calm the child before continuing.
- Students and pregnant members of staff will not carry children.

Position

- Stand in front of the load with your feet apart and your leading leg forward. Your weight should be even over both feet. Position yourself (or turn the load around) so that the heaviest part is against you. If the load is too far away, move toward it or bring it nearer before starting the lift. Do not twist your body to pick it up.

Lifting – always use the correct posture detailed below

- Bend the knees, keeping the back straight
- Tuck the chin in on the way down
- Lean slightly forward if necessary and get a good grip
- Keep the shoulders level, without twisting or turning from the hips.
- Try to grip with the hands around the base of the load.

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- Bring the load to waist height, keeping the lift as smooth as possible.

Moving the child or load

- Move the feet, keeping the load close to the body.
- Proceed carefully, making sure that you can see where you are going.
- Lower the child or load, reversing the procedure for lifting,
- Avoid crushing fingers or toes as you put the load down.
- If you are carrying a load, position and secure the load before setting it down.
- Make sure that the child is rested on a stable base and in case of the child ensure their safety in this position.
- Report any problems immediately, for example, strains and sprains. Where there are changes, for example to the activity or the load, the task must be reassessed.

The task

- Carry children or loads close to the body, lifting and carrying the load at arm's length increases the injury risk.
- Avoid awkward movements such as stooping, reaching or twisting.
- Ensure that the task is well designed and that procedures are followed.
- Try never to lift from the floor or to above shoulder height. Limit the distances for carrying.
- Minimise repetitive actions by re-designing and rotating tasks.
- Plan ahead – use teamwork where the load is too heavy for one person.

The environment

- Ensure that the surroundings are safe. Flooring should be even and not slippery, lighting should be adequate, and the temperature and humidity should be suitable.
- Remove obstructions and ensure that the correct equipment is available.

The individual

- Never attempt manual handling unless you have been trained and given permission to do so.
- Ensure that you are capable of undertaking the task – people with health problems and pregnant women may be particularly at risk of injury.