



*City of*  
**BRADFORD**  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

# **Manual Handling (Loads)**

## **Health and Safety Guidance For Managers**

Issued by Occupational Safety Team

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## Introduction

The aim of this Guidance is to advise managers on how to reduce, as far as possible, the need to manually handle loads within their area of control and to safeguard the health and safety of their staff. Moving and handling of objects and loads is carried out through out the authority in a variety of forms. From loading copier paper to handing objects, handling food, to fully laden wheelie bins. Moving and handing activities have the potential to cause injury if not carried out correctly. Manual handling injuries still account for a percentage of accidents and sick absence at work. Not all injuries stem from a single event or incident; many are cumulative, arising out of repeated movements involving stretching, twisting or bending in awkward positions over a significant period of time.

It is the duty of the Council to safeguard the occupational safety and health of its employees, visitors and anyone who may be affected by its activities. It also has a responsibility to ensure that all employees are suitably trained in the moving and handling techniques appropriate to their occupation.

The effectiveness of this guidance depends on the co-operation of all employees and their acceptance that they also have responsibilities with respect to the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

No manual handling task is risk free, and such operations should be avoided or minimised wherever possible. For simple, low risk, one-off activities it is not necessary to record a risk assessment, but employees may still need to given information, instruction and training. However, where there is a risk of injury arising from manual handling tasks and activities, then a written suitable and sufficient risk assessment is required.

## Managers Responsibilities

**AVOID** the need for handling loads manually.

**ASSESS** manual handling tasks that cannot be avoided.

**REDUCE** the risk of injury as far as possible.

In summary, managers need to assess the risks within the workplace created by the handling and moving of loads (lifting, lowering, pushing or pulling). This includes people (adults and children), plant, equipment, substances and activities. Implement suitable control systems and working processes, to eliminate the need to manually handle loads in the first instance, reduce the amount of handling and control risk. Managers should also monitor and review the risk assessments and take account of any changes in the nature of the operation, new legislation and good practice. They should provide adequate resources to implement this guidance.

Managers and those with supervisory responsibilities will, within their area of control:

- maintain and monitor the work environment, so that it is safe and without risk to health.
- avoid the need for employees to undertake any manual handling operations at work where possible and identify all risks so they can be eliminated or reduced to their lowest level, controlled and monitored.
- involve employees who carry out these tasks and in the development of safe working processes.
- ensure that safe working processes are developed, implemented, adhered to and regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- inform employees and others of the findings of the manual handling risk assessment and any control measures implemented.
- ensure that appropriate manual handling training for all employees in safe handling techniques is provided, reviewed and updated.

- ensure that suitable records are kept of all relevant manual handling training, instruction and information provided.
- review risk assessments annually as a minimum, and where there are significant changes in working arrangements or when an incident has occurred.
- monitoring of the workplace to ensure standards are being maintained.
- undertake risk assessments for new and expectant mothers and young persons.
- monitor sickness absence and consider if manual handling is, or could be, a contributing factor.

## **Employee Responsibility**

Managers must inform employees of their duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions. Employees are expected to report all accidents and incidents in line with the established incident reporting process. Employees must, as part of their normal working arrangements:

- adhere to the requirements of any implemented safe working processes and training regarding the moving and handling of loads.
- use any mechanical assistance equipment or manual handling aids provided to assist with handling loads.
- immediately raise any concerns they may have to their manager with regard to manual handling tasks or activities.
- advise their manager if they are taking any medication, have a medical condition or have an injury etc. that may impact on their ability to undertake manual handling tasks or activities.
- if necessary ask for assistance.

## **Manual Handling Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is a method of evaluating the level of risk so that perceived risks can be eliminated by designing out, or controlled to help prevent accidents, reducing the chances of a serious injury. It is the responsibility of management to ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out. It is important to involve those who carry out those tasks and others with the necessary expertise in the risk assessment process. At least one member of the group involved in the risk assessment process must be competent to complete the task. (A competent person is someone with adequate training, knowledge and experience).

Safe working processes should detail manual handling hazards involved in the task, the control measures and any mechanical equipment to be used to minimise the risks involved.

All plant and equipment required to control the moving and handling risks needs to be identified and effective inspection and maintenance protocols agreed and implemented, this may include the requirements under Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regs (LOLER).

Managers need to ensure the necessary controls they implement will include giving the necessary instruction, information and training to those who may be exposed to moving and handling risks.

Job specific training, including induction training, is the responsibility of managers. Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Occupational Safety Team and/or Workforce Development Team.

Where health monitoring has been identified as a control measure, managers need to liaise with the Employee Health and Wellbeing Team, who can provide professional clinical advice.

Managers who have responsibilities involving the public, service users and clients are responsible for providing suitable safety information for the above and their employees.

Risk assessments must be reviewed annually, and where there has been a significant change or if it is believed to be no longer valid.

The 'Manual Handling Risk Assessment Template (MHRA1)' should be used to record manual handling risk assessment.

## Factors to Consider in Manual Handling Risk Assessments

The important part of any risk assessment is to identify the potential hazards, risks of injury, ill-health, damage and identify controls that either eliminates or minimises the risks to their lowest level.

When completing risk assessments for handling loads, there are four main elements that need to be considered.

These are:

1. **TASK** – does the task involve stretching, reaching, twisting, stooping; unpredictable movement of the load, carrying for long distances, pushing or pulling; repetitive actions. Does it involve holding the load away from the body or carrying one handed, or has a high work rate imposed by a process?
2. **INDIVIDUAL** - do they require special capabilities e.g. strength or height. Does the task put at risk those who may have a health problem, a disability, or who may be pregnant? Is specialist information or training required?
3. **LOAD** – is the load heavy, large, bulky, soft, hard to grasp, unstable, smelly, dirty, textured, pressurised container, intrinsically harmful (e.g. cold, hot, sharp).
4. **ENVIRONMENT** – are floors uneven, slippery, or unstable; are there steps or slopes; is lighting and ventilation adequate; are there constraints on movement and posture. Are persons working at height, or depth, or in a confined space? Would the weather conditions i.e. extreme heat, cold, wet, wind, create additional risks?

Other elements to consider are the storage of loads, third party activities, personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing and lifting aids.

The 'Manual Handling Hazards and Controls Guidance' is a useful to document to refer to when carrying out manual handling assessments.

## Training

It is very important to train employees in safe manual handling techniques and the correct use of manual handling and lifting equipment.

Training should cover

- manual handling risks and how injuries can occur.
- how to carry out safe manual handling, including good lifting and handling technique. This should include practical elements to lifting and handling and be demonstrated and practiced.
- appropriate safe systems of work for the task and environment.

## Lifting/Handling Aids

Mechanical lifting and handling aids should be provided where they have been identified as a practical control measure for either eliminating or reducing risk. When selecting lifting and handling equipment it is worth considering the following:

- consult with employees during the risk assessment process and when considering possible lifting handling aid solutions.
- seek advice from suitable suppliers.
- request equipment on a trial basis, if possible, to check it solves the problem and is fit for purpose. Involve the staff who will be expected to use it.
- check the proposed use will be within the equipment's safe working load.
- does it suit the area it will be used in? Is there enough room to manoeuvre, enough headroom etc. Does it suit the terrain in terms of stability and ground surface?
- ensure the correct equipment is provided for the task and it is fit for purpose – keep up to date with the latest developments.
- equipment should be checked and maintained. Establish a pre use checks and maintenance programme and a well promoted fault reporting system.
- will employees require specialist training to use the equipment? Establish the correct training for staff.

## **Useful Guidance**

The Health and Safety Executive have developed a very useful guidance document regarding manual handling risks and have identified possible control measures to help with risk assessment process.

[Manual Handling at Work HSE guidance document.](#)

They have also developed Manual Handling Assessment Charts ([MAC tool](#)) to help with assessing manual handling risks.