

# Manual Handling (Loads)

## Hazards and Controls Guidance

This guidance document is provided as reference for managers and assessors to use during the assessment process. This table of hazards and suggested controls are by no means exhaustive. Often just making small changes in the way objects are moved can significantly reduce the risk of injury to staff.

The Manual Handling Risk Assessment Template (MHRA1) should be used to record manual handling risks assessments. The manual handling assessment template has been designed so it can be completed electronically and by using “**save as**,” assessors can save assessments to their service folders.

For further advice and guidance see the Occupational Safety website [www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/)

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Hazards	Controls
<b>1. The Task</b>	
<p><b>Do the tasks involve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holding loads away from the body</li> <li>• twisting</li> <li>• stooping</li> <li>• reaching upwards</li> <li>• large movements (lifting/lowering)</li> <li>• long carrying distances</li> <li>• one-handed grips</li> <li>• strenuous pushing and pulling</li> <li>• unpredictable movements</li> <li>• repetitive handling</li> <li>• a high work rate imposed by a process</li> <li>• insufficient rest or recovery times</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party activity impacting on the task</li> <li>• seasonal changes causing problems for workload</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove the need to handle loads</li> <li>• redesign the task to reduce the need to handle the load</li> <li>• look at mechanical aids</li> <li>• improve the workplace to allow easier movement of loads</li> <li>• if objects need to be lifted they should be held close to the body</li> <li>• plan lifting work to allow for breaks in between activities</li> <li>• avoid twisted lifting and handling postures by designing the task correctly</li> <li>• reduce the need to pick items up from the floor – use shelf or hydraulic trolleys</li> <li>• when lifting an object from height, where possible use correct access equipment to reduce the risk from stretching</li> <li>• break the journey, ensure adequate breaks or reduce carrying distances</li> <li>• assess and check the weight of the load before moving</li> <li>• look at rotation of work and task breaks</li> <li>• reduce the need to complete tasks in a set time</li> <li>• pushing loads are generally less of a strain than pulling loads</li> <li>• discuss issues/controls with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties</li> </ul>
<b>2. The Load</b>	
<p><b>Are the loads:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heavy, bulky, unwieldy</li> <li>• difficult to grasp</li> <li>• unstable/unpredictable</li> <li>• large</li> <li>• soft</li> <li>• smelly/dirty</li> <li>• textured</li> <li>• pressurised containers</li> <li>• intrinsically harmful (cold, hot, sharp)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can the load be broken down to make handling easier</li> <li>• use team lifting techniques or mechanical aids</li> <li>• if possible reduce the size down</li> <li>• provide good fitting gloves and clothing to protect staff and improve handling</li> <li>• ensure the weight of the load is known</li> <li>• consider using a trolley, roller conveyors, sack carts or a form of transport that does not require physical lifting</li> <li>• can the supplier break the load down into smaller packages etc.</li> </ul>

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<b>3. The Working Environment</b>	
<p><b>Are there:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constraints on posture</li> <li>• floors in poor condition, uneven, slippery</li> <li>• variations in floor levels slopes/steps</li> <li>• hot/cold/humid conditions</li> <li>• strong air movements</li> <li>• poor lighting conditions</li> <li>• poor ventilation</li> <li>• confined or congested workspaces</li> <li>• working at height</li> <li>• working at depths</li> <li>• work areas untidy and/or unclean</li> <li>• items badly stacked or piled excessively high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check the proposed work area and remove obstructions to allow free movement</li> <li>• maintain good housekeeping standards – clear, clean work areas</li> <li>• reorganise stacked loads so they are not likely to topple or be difficult to access</li> <li>• improve the condition of the flooring and use ramps to overcome steps</li> <li>• ensure employees are familiar with the work areas or surroundings to reduce slip, trips, falls etc.</li> <li>• prevent or reduce working in extremes of hot and cold temperatures</li> <li>• protect staff against weather conditions</li> <li>• improve the lighting and ventilation in the area</li> <li>• ensure the correct access equipment is being used for working at height and to access depths</li> <li>• ensure correct lifting aids are used</li> <li>• shelves and racking need to be correctly organised, not over loaded and easily accessed</li> </ul>
<b>4. Individual</b>	
<p><b>Does the job:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require unusually capability i.e. strength or height</li> <li>• endanger those with a disability</li> <li>• endanger those with health problems</li> <li>• endanger those who are pregnant</li> <li>• endanger young persons</li> <li>• require special information and training</li> <li>• does PPE and/or clothing restrict or hinder movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carry out Individual risk assessment for those who may have a medical condition, a disability, young person or are a new or expectant mother.</li> <li>• ensure staff are suitable trained in manual handling techniques</li> <li>• ensure staff are trained in the correct use of mechanical lifting/handling equipment and access equipment</li> <li>• rotate work patterns and include suitable rest breaks.</li> <li>• ensure staff wear suitable clothing, including footwear and PPE, that does not hinder the ability to handle loads safely</li> </ul>

Hazards	Controls
<b>5 Lifting and Handling Equipment</b>	
<p>Is, or has, the lifting or handling device</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correct type for the job being carried out</li> <li>• have mechanisms, control switches, chains, straps, hydraulic rams that are in good working condition</li> <li>• is well maintained and inspected where appropriate</li> <li>• have wheels that are suitable for the floors it will be used on</li> <li>• have wheels that run freely</li> <li>• have handles that are at correct height between the waist and shoulders</li> <li>• have handle grips in good condition and are comfortable to hold</li> <li>• have brakes, and if so, do they work effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide equipment that is suitable for the task</li> <li>• establish pre use checks ensuring the equipment is fit for use</li> <li>• implement planned preventative maintenance and inspection regimes</li> <li>• adjust the work rate</li> <li>• establish a 'fault report' and 'equipment removal from use' process</li> <li>• change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily</li> <li>• provide better handles and handle grips</li> <li>• make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective</li> <li>• where appropriate, arrange specialist training for employees</li> </ul>
<b>6. Organisational Factors</b>	
<p>Work organisation factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the work repetitive or boring</li> <li>• is work machine or system-paced</li> <li>• do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive</li> <li>• have workers little control of the work and working methods</li> <li>• is there poor communication between managers and employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce the monotony by changing tasks</li> <li>• ensure workers' skills are fully utilised</li> <li>• ensure workloads and deadlines are achievable</li> <li>• encourage good communication and teamwork</li> <li>• involve employees in decisions</li> </ul>