



Health & Safety Manual Handling Policy

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¹ or earlier if change in legislation or on risk assessment

Amendment Control

Version	Date	Amendments
1.0	Dec 2019	(SH)
1.1	Oct 2021	Update to new format
2.0	Oct 2022	Sections 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 18 (BR)

Policy Summary

Manual handling can involve a wide range of people and the university has a legal requirement to minimise handling in the workplace. This policy requires to be followed to ensure compliance with the present legislation in place.

This policy lays out the requirements on how to safely manage manual handling whilst in the university.

The policy covers:

- Duties – who is responsible for what
- Assessing and reducing the risk - how
- Mechanical assistance and good handling technique
- Responsibilities of Deans and Directors
- Responsibilities of staff
- Responsibilities of students
- Responsibilities placed on the Health and Safety Team
- Avoiding manual handling
- Manual Handling Risk Assessment
- Appropriate steps and controls that require to be put in place
- Footwear, clothing and personal protective equipment
- Training and assessment
- Reviewing the manual handling risk assessments

Compliance with this policy will ensure that the personnel carrying out the tasks are given the relevant information, instruction and training to ensure safe handling.

This guidance and manual handling principles also applies to Contractors working on behalf of the University.

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1. Introduction

Why do we need this policy?

Manual handling can involve a wide range of people and the university has a legal requirement to minimise handling in the workplace. This policy requires to be followed to ensure compliance with the present legislation in place. This guidance and manual handling principles also apply to Contractors working on behalf of the University.

How will it be complied with?

Staff require to ensure that they carry out the necessary eLearning and training where it has been identified that they are at risk of injury from carrying out manual handling duties whilst in the workplace. Staff are required to be involved in the assessment and must ensure that they follow this assessment.

Deans and Directors require to ensure that assessments have taken place and where reasonably practicable that the necessary equipment, aids and personal protective equipment have been supplied. The Health & Safety Team will provide training, support and guidance to ensure compliance with this policy.

2. Manual handling definition

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations apply to a wide range of manual handling activities at work.

The regulation defines manual handling as:

"..the transporting or supporting of a load (including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving of a load) by hand or bodily force. "

A load may be either an inanimate object, such as a box or trolley, or an animate object, such as a person or animal.

Incorrect manual handling can cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

The term 'musculoskeletal disorders' covers:

"..any injury, damage or disorder of the joints or other tissues in the upper/lower limbs or the back."

These disorders account for more than a third of all work-related illnesses and can occur to any individual in any occupation, including offices, laboratories, libraries and maintenance. Although manual handling injuries can be caused by intense or strenuous activities or unexpected events, such as a fall, often this isn't the case. Unfortunately, most occur as a result of cumulative strain, i.e. gradual wear and tear caused by day to day tasks, with the person not feeling the pain until several hours after the injury. In rare cases, this can result in long-term debilitating sickness.

3. Duties of employers and employees

Duties of employers

The university (employer) is required to:

- As far as reasonably practicable, have arrangements in place to avoid the need for manual handling.
- Assess the risk of injury from manual handling that cannot be avoided and review this assessment if there is reason to suggest it is no longer valid, or there have been significant changes to the manual handling activity.
- As far as reasonably practicable, where manual handling cannot be avoided, reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.
- Monitor any procedures in place or introduced to reduce the risk from manual handling and act upon any findings to implement further improvements where reasonably practicable.
- Provide training and information to employees, including specific information about any loads they may handle and equipment they are provided with, to assist in the manual handling of the load.

It is important to take an ergonomic approach when looking at manual handling activities. Therefore, assessments should include consideration of the task; the load; the working environment; and the individual capability of those carrying out the task. An assessment should be carried out by the person, or team of people, familiar with and/or directly involved with the task being assessed.

Duties of employees

Carrying out a [manual handling risk assessment](#)

- Is an assessment required?
- Who should carry it out?
- How should it be done?
- Generic and task specific manual handling assessments
- Record [accidents](#) and ill health
- Record, communicate and store the assessment
- Review as appropriate

4. Assessing and reducing manual handling risks

The task	The load	Working environment	Individual capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Layout• Work routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size and weight• Designing equipment so it can be handled easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Space constraints• Floors• Temperature• Ventilation• Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physically suitable for task

5. Mechanical assistance and good handling technique

Frequent and heavy lifting and handling can cause back injuries. But using lifting and handling aids can remove or reduce that risk and keep workers healthy and at work. The following guidance is useful for those involved in the selection of lifting and handling aids - [Are you making best use of lifting and handling aids? \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).

Similarly using good handling techniques will help reduce injuries - [HSE guide](#) .

There are some simple things to do before and during the lift/carry:

- Think before lifting, will there be any obstructions along the route.
- Keep the load close to the waist. The load should be kept close to the body for as long as possible while lifting.
- Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.
- Start in a good position, adopt a stable position and make sure your feet are apart, with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance.
- Get a good hold.
- Do not flex the back any further whilst lifting, avoid twisting or leaning sideways.
- Move smoothly.
- Don't lift or handle more than you can manage.
- If you need to adjust, put down load and start again.

Maintenance of any manual handling equipment is important to ensure the equipment is working in the way it was designed and that it is not creating other issues for the person lifting or moving a load. Users must use and maintain the equipment as per manufacturer's instructions.

6. Responsibilities – Deans and Directors

- a) Ensure that manual handling tasks are taken into account as part of the risk assessment process.
- b) Design out or reduce the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable in areas under their control (refer Section 11).
- c) Ensure suitable and sufficient manual handling assessments are carried out and implemented. If assistance is required, contact the Health & Safety Office.
- d) Ensure that suitable and sufficient resources are available to enable manual handling tasks to be carried out with minimal risk.
- e) Provide [appropriate and suitable equipment](#), such as trolleys or sack trucks, to minimise the risk of injury through manual handling.
- f) Ensure all equipment is inspected prior to use, in the case of lifting equipment under LOLER, it must be inspected and thoroughly examined at regular intervals, and that a planned preventative maintenance programme is in place.
- g) Provide suitable personal protective equipment if required.
- h) Refer individuals to [Occupational Health](#) if informed of health problems related to manual handling.
- i) Ensure relevant staff complete training as per section 16.

7. Responsibilities – Staff

- a) Where appropriate, undertake training as per section 16.
- b) Carry out manual handling assessment and ensure all relevant controls are implemented, prior to work commencing.
- c) Ensure staff undertake any specialist training e.g. lifting and handling equipment.
- d) Bring any problems relating to manual handling to the attention of Supervisors or Line Managers.
- e) Do not attempt to lift or move any containers or objects which may be beyond their capabilities.

8. Responsibilities – Students (including research students)

- a) Follow and comply with any local rules regarding manual handling.
- b) Use any equipment provided for the transportation and moving of materials and equipment.

9. Responsibilities – Contractors

Contractors are responsible for ensuring that:

- a) A manual handling assessment and method statement are prepared, and that suitable control measures are implemented to reduce any identified risk to as low as reasonably practicable.
- b) The workforce have been consulted on the formulation of the manual handling assessments and method statements and the relevant control measures being proposed.
- c) All personnel involved in or who are likely to be affected by the work, receive adequate instruction and training to carry out their task.
- d) Work is carried out by trained and competent personnel instructed in the requirements of the manual handling assessment and method statement and the proposed control measures.
- e) Competent, trained personnel are appointed to supervise work areas covered by this procedure and related work activities.
- f) Control measures are reviewed on a periodic basis or when an incident or significant change dictates, to evaluate their on-going suitability and effectiveness. The workforce will be involved in this process. (Any changes deemed necessary will be implemented after proposals have been evaluated for hazards and risks, the method statement and manual handling assessment have been updated and briefed to the workforce and any additional training requirements carried out).

Training should cover:

- Manual handling risk factors
- How injuries can occur
- How to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling techniques
- Appropriate systems of work for the individual's task and environment
- The use of mechanical aids and should include practical work to allow the trainee experience and to put right anything that the trainee is not doing safely.

10. Health & Safety Team

The Health & Safety Team will:

- a) Provide advice and guidance on manual handling issues.
- b) Provide advice and guidance on the selection/purchasing of the correct equipment for the task.
- c) Provide [eLearning](#) and face to face manual handling training.
- d) Review and revise University manual handling policy and procedures as necessary to ensure compliance with current legislation.
- e) Provide advice and support on specialist training and equipment.

11. Avoiding manual handling

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations set out a clear hierarchy of control covering manual handling. Where possible avoid manual handling operations:

- Redesign the task to avoid moving the load.
- Automate or mechanise the process.
- The best time to decide about mechanisation or automation is when you design plant or work systems - design the layout of a process so there is very little movement of materials.
- Consider introducing, for example, a conveyor, a chute, a pallet truck, an electric or hand-powered hoist, or a lift truck to reduce the risk of harm - [mechanical aids](#) can also help reduce or eliminate risks from manual handling.

Where it is not reasonably practical to avoid manual handling then:

- A suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out covering the operation.
- Appropriate steps must be taken to reduce the risk of injury to those undertaking the manual handling operation to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
- Provide those undertaking the manual handling operation, where it is reasonably practicable to do so, with information on the load i.e. centre of gravity, weight.
- Provide appropriate training on safe lifting techniques.

12. Manual handling risk assessment

Examples: Health & Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck5.pdf

The tasks: do they involve -

- holding or manipulating loads at distance from body
- unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially:
 - twisting the body
 - stooping
 - reaching upwards
- excessive movement of loads, especially:
 - excessive lifting or lowering distances
 - excessive carrying distances
- excessive pushing or pulling of loads
- risk of sudden movement of loads
- frequent or prolonged physical effort
- insufficient rest or recovery periods
- a rate of work imposed by a process

The loads: are they -

- heavy
- bulky or unwieldy
- difficult to grasp
- unstable, or with contents likely to shift
- sharp, hot or otherwise potentially damaging

Individual capability:

does the job –

- require unusual strength, height, etc.
- create a hazard to those who might reasonably be considered to be pregnant or to have a health problem
- require special information or training for its safe performance

are people –

- physically suitable for the task

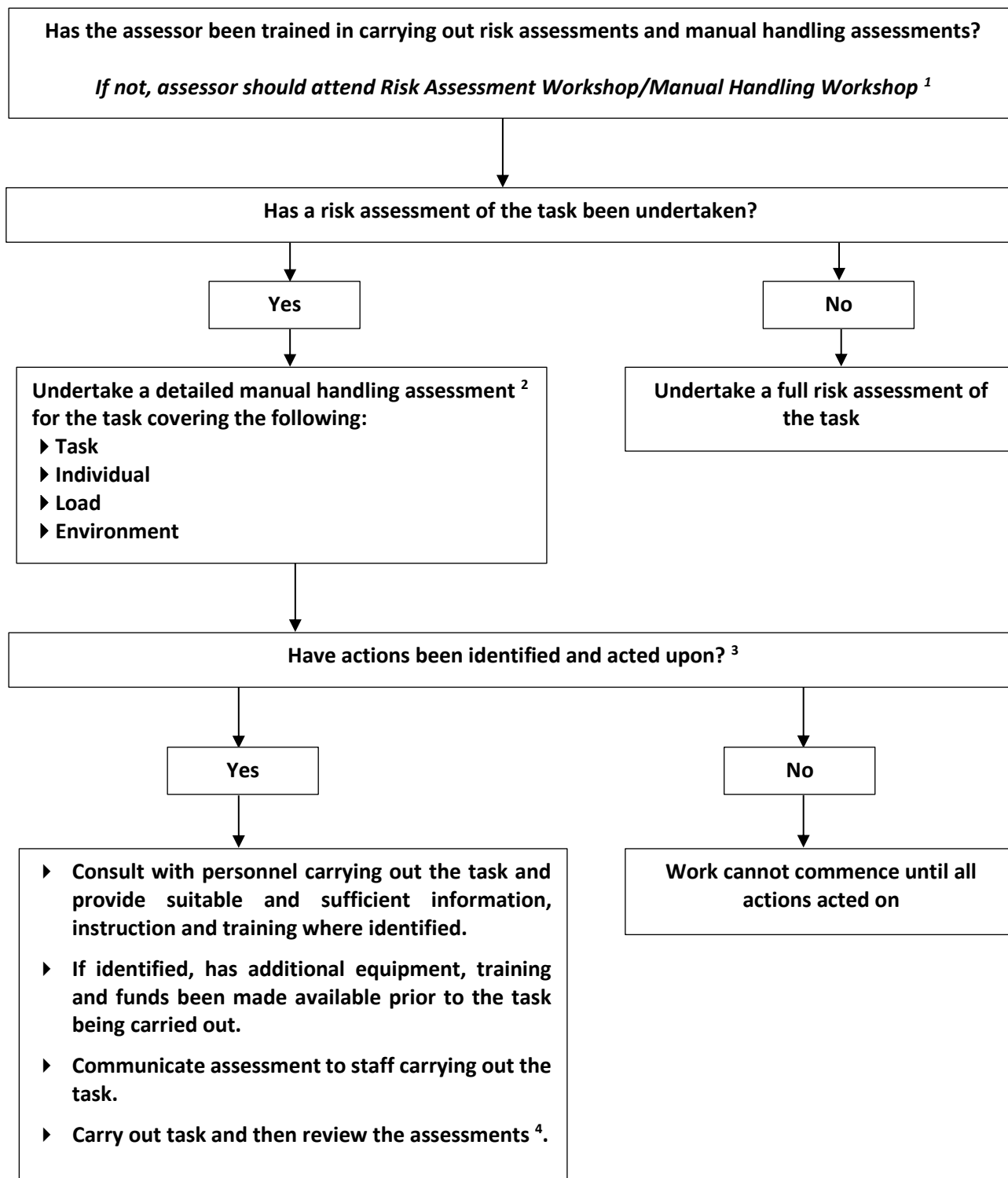
The working environment: are there -

- space constraints preventing good posture
- uneven, slippery or unstable floors
- variations in level of floors or work surfaces
- extremes of temperature or humidity
- conditions causing ventilation problems or gusts of wind
- poor lighting conditions

Other factors

- Is movement or posture hindered by personal protective equipment or by clothing

13. Appropriate steps



Notes

¹ Section 16 ² Section 12 ³ Sections 14 and 15 ⁴ Section 17

14. Additional controls

Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.

You should consider the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability, for example:

- The postures adopted to carry out task (see good handling technique – [HSE guide](#)).
- How far the load is lifted, lowered or carried.
- Modify the work environment to reduce twisting movements, crouching or lifting loads to a height that involves overstretching.
- Does the load need to be moved up any steep ramps.
- Carrying loads awkwardly, possibly one-handed to open doors etc.
- The frequency of the task.
- The weight of the load, can you reduce the weight or size of the load into smaller loads.
- The nature of the load (for example hot, sharp or slippery).
- Making the load easier to grip.
- Cramped work areas, ensure there is ample space to carry out any lifting operation.
- Poor floor surfaces.
- Poor lighting, extremes of temperature or poor weather conditions, e.g. making surfaces and underfoot conditions slippery, loads unstable in windy conditions or strong air movements.
- Workers' strength, fitness and underlying medical conditions (e.g. a history of back problems).
- Change storage locations, so that load movements are kept to a minimum.
- Change the work routine, to prevent repetitive strain injuries.
- Whether team lifting can be adopted (ensuring that people are equally capable and experienced).
- Slips, trips and falls caused by poor housekeeping.
- Be careful not to damage the load.
- Be careful not to damage University property or other property.

Also, look out for:

- Workers breathing heavily and sweating.
- Workers who complain of excessive fatigue.
- Working whilst physically tired, ensure sufficient rest or recovery periods are included in the process.
- Reluctance to do a particular task.
- The availability and use of equipment to help with the task.
- Do not be distracted by mobile phones.

15. Clothing, footwear and other considerations

The relevant personal protective equipment, e.g. footwear and clothing, must be supplied by the relevant School or Service where it is deemed required to protect the individual from harm. Personal protective equipment is a last resort and all other avenues must be investigated before issuing PPE. The assessment of risk must consider and address compatibility issues with PPE and the task.

Other considerations prior to the task taking place include: long hair, chains and necklaces, clothing, etc. that may hinder or cause injury during the task through entanglement, also moving a heavy load that could cause entrapment and crushing if not moved properly.

16. Training and assessment

Staff carrying out the task

- Complete the online [Essential Skillz](#) manual handling course if carrying out any handling or moving.
- Staff assessing the task and carrying out the manual handling assessment must also attend face to face manual handling training.

Staff undertaking the assessment

- Complete the online [Essential Skillz](#) manual handling course if carrying out any handling or moving.
- Staff assessing the task and carrying out the manual handling assessment must also attend face to face manual handling training. This can be arranged through the Health & Safety Office.
- Must consult with the staff carrying out the task prior to assessment being completed.
- Explain the findings and pass to line manager where equipment or items to reduce the risk require to be provided, prior to carrying out the assessed handling activity.
- Ensure that all relevant controls are in place.
- Ensure that all relevant training on the control measures/equipment has been carried out prior to the task being undertaken.
- Communicate completed assessment to relevant staff.
- Review the assessment as appropriate (refer Section 17).

Particular consideration should be given to 'Employees especially at risk' who:

- Are or have recently been pregnant.
- Young workers, who through their lack of knowledge and experience, may not fully understand the manual handling implications.
- Staff with pre-existing medical conditions or history which could affect their manual handling capability or exacerbate an existing condition or lead to long term health damage.
- Those returning from injury or medical operation may require a return to work assessment, these are organised by the Line Manager and Human Resources.
- Those moving and handling gas bottles or dangerous substances (liquid nitrogen), etc.

The assessments must be more detailed and may require specialist advice on how this can be carried out safely. If required, contact the Health & Safety Office for further help and guidance.

17. Reviewing the manual handling risk assessment

All manual handling assessments require to be reviewed every 12 months or:

- After first use to ensure that they work
- Following an incident/accident
- Following a complaint
- Following a change in system or process
- Following a change in equipment

Staff should be included in any consultation process on manual handling risk assessments.

18. Health Surveillance

It has been recognised that various health conditions can arise as a result of carrying out manual handling activities and therefore all University personnel involved in such activities must undergo Health Surveillance in accordance with the University's Health Surveillance Policy.

Manual handling, if not properly controlled, could pose a risk to a person's health. The increase in risk of injury can come from various factors such as:

- The load being too heavy, large, difficult to grasp or unstable.
- The task being too strenuous or involving awkward postures or movements.
- The working environment lacking sufficient space.
- Having slippery, uneven or unstable floors.
- Having extreme temperatures or poor lighting.
- See also Sections 12 and 14.

Resulting in:

- Both short-term and long-term health damage
- Back injuries
- Strains and sprains
- Hand injuries
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Slip, trip and fall injuries
- Hernias
- Foot injuries

If the risk assessment indicates there is a risk to the health of any person, then the provision of health surveillance shall include a musculoskeletal assessment. Following a baseline, assessment should be carried out annually for 2 years and then every 3 years thereafter unless a cause for concern is identified.

- A record will be kept of any employee undergoing health surveillance by the occupational health support.
- The individual requires to be informed by a suitably qualified person.
- The risk assessment will need to be reviewed.
- That individual must be assigned to alternative work where there is no risk from further manual handling activities taking into account any advice given by the doctor or occupational health professional.
- Continued health surveillance is provided for a review of the health of any person who has been exposed.

The health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks that is used to:

- Collect data to detect or evaluate health hazards.
- Protect employees' health by early detection of changes.
- Evaluate control measures.
- Create an opportunity for training and education of employees regarding the risk of specific work-related conditions.
- Create an opportunity for individuals to discuss concerns about work related ill-health.