

Health & Safety, Edinburgh Napier University

Manual Handling Policy

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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.

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.

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

- Mechanical assistance – e.g. trolley, sack trucks
- Maintenance of equipment, as per manufacturer's instructions
- Good handling technique – [HSE guide](#)

6. Responsibilities – Deans and Directors

- a) Ensure that manual handling tasks are taken into account as part of the risk assessment process.
- b) Reduce the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable in areas under their control (refer Section 10).
- 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) Provide suitable personal protective equipment if required.
- g) Refer individuals to [Occupational Health](#) if informed of health problems related to manual handling.
- h) Ensure relevant staff complete training as per section 15.

7. Responsibilities - staff

- a) Where appropriate, undertake training as per section 15.
- 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

- 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. Health & Safety Team

The Health & Safety Team will:

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

10. Avoiding 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.

If this is not possible then the necessary controls require to be put in place to ensure the risk is reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

11. 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 trunk
- unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially:
 - twisting the trunk
 - 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 -

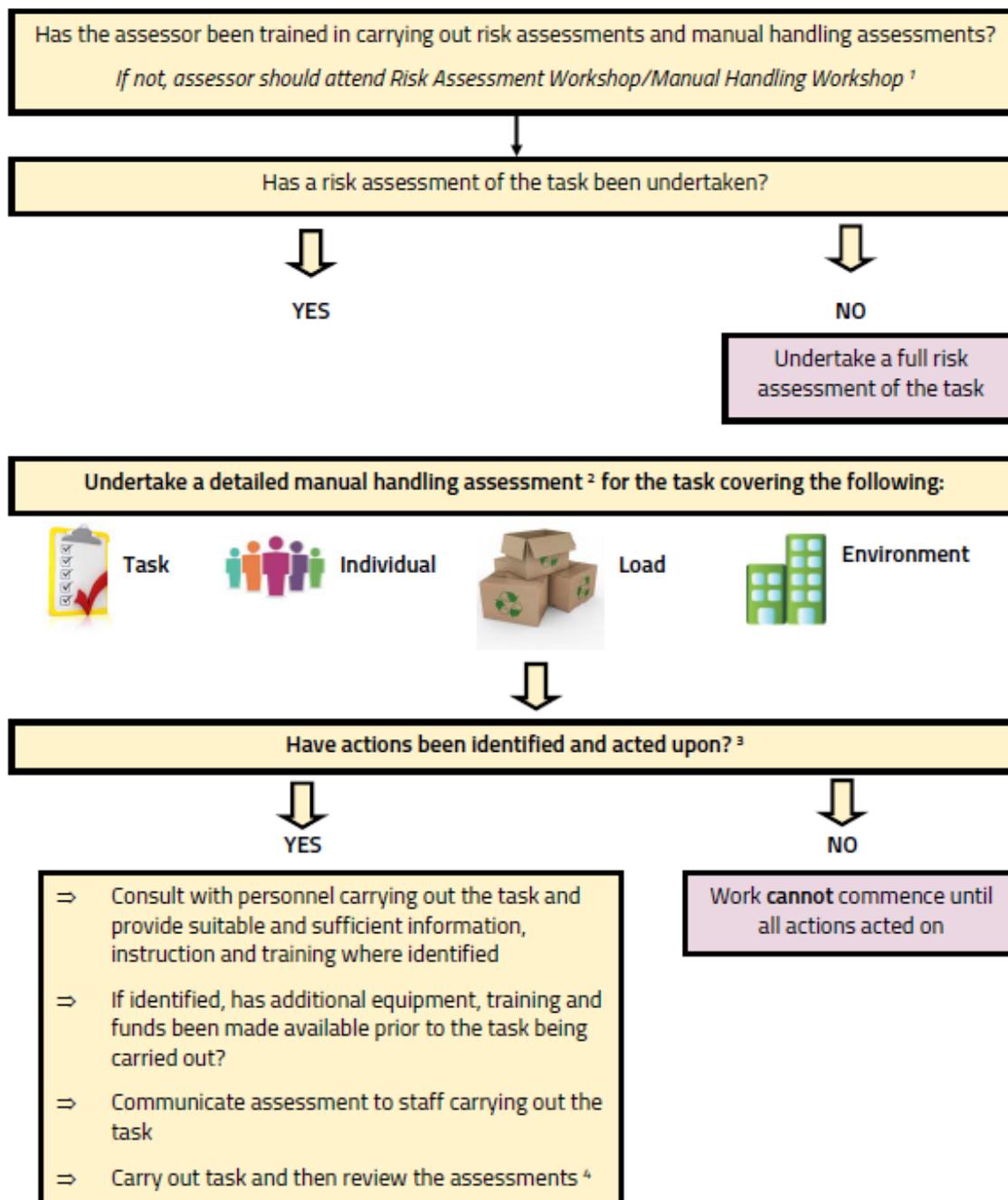
- space constraints preventing good posture
- uneven, slippery or unstable floors
- variations in level of floors or work surfaces
- extremes of temperature or humidity
- conditions causing ventilation problems or gusts of wind
- poor lighting conditions

Other factors

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

12. Appropriate steps

Manual Handling Flowchart



Notes: Refer to [Manual Handling Policy](#):

¹ Section 15 ² Section 11 ³ Sections 13 and 14 ⁴ Section 16

13. 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
- the frequency of the task
- the weight of the load
- the nature of the load (for example hot, sharp or slippery)
- cramped work areas
- poor floor surfaces
- poor lighting, extremes of temperature
- workers' strength, fitness and underlying medical conditions (e.g. a history of back problems)

Also, look out for:

- workers breathing heavily and sweating
- workers who complain of excessive fatigue
- reluctance to do a particular task
- the availability and use of equipment to help with the lift

14. 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.

15. 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.
- 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 16).

Employees especially at risk

- Pregnant workers.
- Staff with pre-existing medical conditions.
- 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.

16. 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