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MANUAL HANDLING

CODE OF PRACTICE

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V1	31/10/13
V2	May 2023 - E Fahy Summary of changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added wording to introduction and aim. • Added link the HSE MH RA. • Added additional information and links to further reading section

Introduction

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended in 2002 ('the Regulations') apply to a wide range of manual handling activities, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. The University will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all hazards arising from manual handling activities are eliminated where possible and where it is not, the risk will be assessed and controlled.

Aim

The University recognises its responsibilities as set out in law under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. To this end the following code of practice has been produced with the aim of assisting departments to fulfil their duties in accordance with the above act and more specifically, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended). This code should not be considered in isolation and particular attention should be paid to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 which requires that an assessment is made of all activities that pose a risk to the health and safety of all employees whilst at work. Further guidance regarding this requirement is contained within the University's risk assessment guidance notes.

The purpose of this code is to provide each University department with information to allow them to plan to assist the management of risks associated with the manual handling of loads. The range of work activities involving manual handling is wide ranging and therefore staff working in most areas of the University could be exposed to the risks associated with such activity. Other risks associated with musculoskeletal injuries can also be associated with manual handling.

Manual handling operations will be identified and assessments conducted where necessary with results recorded. Employees are required to report any health problems which may affect their ability to lift safely, and to co-operate with the University on matters of Health and Safety. Following a risk assessment, sufficient training, information, instruction and advice will be provided to ensure that employees can carry out their duties safely.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 define manual handling as;

"a wide range of activities involving the transporting or supporting of a load, this includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving. The load may be either inanimate, for example, a box or a trolley, or animate and the risks from manual handling can be found across all workplaces"

Responsibilities

- Heads of Department

Heads of Department must ensure that arrangements are in place to identify and manage the risks associated with manual handling activities. Heads of Department may delegate the actual risk assessment process, but they must ensure that the task, responsible staff members are competent to conduct such assessments. This Code of Practice is not meant to prevent staff being involved in manual handling activities and staff will often make their own decision to move an object. Where the activity presents a potentially a hazardous manual handling risk, the activity must not go ahead to allow planning and a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be put in place. Where manual handling can be avoided through handling aids or mechanising the process, this should be sought in line with the hierarchy of controls.

Heads of Department (or where appropriate managers and supervisors) must ensure that whilst assessing the risk of activities involving manual handling, relevant control measures are implemented and maintained; that there is adequate provision of suitable information, instruction and training available; that there is an appropriate level of supervision and staff experience; and that skills are considered as part of the risk assessment process.

- University Secretary's Office

The University's Secretary's Office shall monitor and audit compliance with the Manual Handling Code of Practice. On request the Health and Safety Advisor will provide information and advice to staff regarding manual handling operations and provide sufficient resources and training to enable staff to comply with this policy.

- Health and Safety Coordinators

Health and Safety Coordinators shall monitor compliance with this code through the course of their work activities, providing relevant guidance to Heads of Department and staff within their department where required.

Safety Coordinators will also liaise with any competent persons within the department to ensure that control measures implemented for the purpose of reducing the level of risk to staff involved in manual handling operations are sufficient and verifying that suitable working practices have been adopted. This

shall also include the consideration of any additional hazards where processes have been automated or mechanised.

- Staff

All University staff shall work in accordance with safe working practices that are in place within their department or working area, making proper use of any equipment provided for their own or others safety, staff are also obliged to report any defects or problems with the control measures that have been put in place. Staff should attend appropriate training as directed by the Head of Department and report any condition which may affect their ability to work safely during the handling of any load.

Assessing the Risk

The high risk of injury associated with manual handling operations means all work activities that involve the lifting of any load must be risk assessed in advance. This risk may be addressed in two different ways:

1. Regular work activities

These are work activities that take place regularly and form part of the department's usual duties. It is therefore expected that staff will be exposed to a manual handling risk on a continual basis. Where this is the case it is necessary to consider the following questions:

- i. Can the activity be avoided by re-designing the task to avoid moving and handling or by automating or mechanising the process?

There are often simple solutions to avoiding manual handling operations and it is important to consider the long-term advantages of changing a system to minimise the risk of injury to staff.

- ii. Can the activity be made safer by introducing mechanical assistance or changing the task to ensure the level of risk is reduced to an acceptable level?

Breaking up an activity into smaller tasks or introducing a form of mechanical assistance can significantly reduce the risk staff may be exposed to. All manual handling risks associated with regular work activities should be considered and documented using a University risk assessment template for manual handling.

2. Irregular Activities

These are one-off activities that are carried out infrequently or irregularly, these can also be higher risk activities that may involve staff who are not trained to carry out manual handling related tasks. Where such activities arise, manual handling should be planned in advance and the following questions considered:

- i. Is the planned activity safe and if not;
- ii. What needs to be done to ensure staff are protected from the risk of a manual handling injury?

Each department is required to identify and assess the risk posed to staff involved in manual handling operations. As part of the risk assessment process the industry standard hierarchy of control measures, as noted in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, should be considered:

- a) **Avoid** hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable. This may be done by redesigning the task to avoid moving the load or by automating or mechanising the process.
- b) Make a suitable and sufficient **assessment** of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.
- c) **Reduce** the risk of injury from those operations so far as is reasonably practicable. Where possible, mechanical assistance should be provided, for example, a sack trolley or hoist. Where this is not reasonably practicable then changes to the task, the load and the working environment should be explored.

Making as Assessment

When completing a risk assessment, the following should be considered:

HSE Manual Handling Risk Assessment Checklist [Full manual handling risk assessment: Examples of assessment checklists \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/manualhandling/)

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>Do the tasks involve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holding loads away from the body? • large vertical movement? • twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? • long carrying distances? • strenuous pushing or pulling? • repetitive handling? • insufficient rest or recovery time? • a work rate imposed by a process? 	<p><i>Could you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a lifting aid? • improve workplace layout to improve efficiency? • reduce the amount of twisting and stooping? • avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads? • reduce carrying distances? • avoid repetitive handling • vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used? • push rather than pull?
<p><i>Are the loads:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heavy or bulky? • difficult to grasp? • unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)? • harmful, eg sharp or hot? • awkwardly stacked? • too large for the handler to see over? 	<p><i>Could you make the load:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighter or less bulky? • easier to grasp? • more stable? • evenly stacked? <p>If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg by providing handles or smaller packages?</p>
<p><i>Within the working environment, are there:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrictions on posture? • bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? • variations in floor levels? • hot/cold/humid conditions? • gusts of wind or other strong air movements? 	<p><i>Could you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove obstructions to free movement? • provide better flooring? • avoid steps and steep ramps? • prevent extremes of hot and cold? • improve lighting?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor lighting conditions? • restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? • ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for their work?
<p><i>Individual capacity, does the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require unusual capability, eg above average strength or agility? • endanger those with a health problem or learning/ physical disability? • endanger pregnant women? • call for special information or training? 	<p><i>Could you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness? • take extra care of pregnant workers? • give your employees more information, eg about the range of tasks they are likely to face? • provide more training (see 'What about training?') • get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to?
<p><i>Handling aids and equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the device the correct type for the job? • is it well maintained? • are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface? • do the wheels run freely? • is the handle height between the waist and shoulders? • are the handle grips in good condition and comfortable? • are there any brakes? If so, do they work? 	<p><i>Could you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjust the work rate? • provide equipment that is more suitable for the task? • carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems? • change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily? • provide better handles and handle grips? • make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?
<p><i>Work organisation factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the work repetitive or boring? • is work machine or system-paced? • do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive? • have workers little control of the work and working methods? • is there poor communication between managers and employees 	<p><i>Could you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change tasks to reduce the monotony? • make more use of workers' skills? • make workloads and deadlines more achievable? • encourage good communication and teamwork? • involve workers in decisions? • provide better training and information?

Further Reading

Health and Safety Training: A Brief Guide – HSE – INDG345 [Health and safety training \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992- HSE

(as amended) Guidance on Regulations [The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. - HSE

Approved Code of Practice and guidance [Health and safety regulation... a short guide HSC13 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Manual handling at work- A brief guide- HSE [Manual handling at work - Musculoskeletal disorders - HSE](#)

HSE's website on musculoskeletal disorders: www.hse.gov.uk/msd

Manual handling: Solutions you can handle HSG115 HSE Books 1994

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Liverpool Hope University Website – Risk Assessments