

Phoenix Community Care Ltd Policy & Procedure

Minimal Moving & Handling of Static Loads

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Minimal Moving & Handling of Static Loads

Introduction

The following procedural arrangement has been prepared in compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHOR). It provides the necessary information needed to carry out risk assessments for all staff, volunteers, bank and agency staff in the moving and handling of static objects.

This procedural arrangement must be read in conjunction with the procedural arrangements on general workplace risk assessment. To comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations impose duties on PCC to carry out risk assessments.

Management, employees, and volunteers are required to observe and co-operate with this procedural arrangement, which is effective immediately.

It is the responsibility of PCC to provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment, equipment and systems of work for all employees and volunteers in their duties. It is recognised that the nature of care work requires many of our workforce to undertake manual handling. Both medical and scientific knowledge stresses the importance of an ergonomic approach in removing or reducing the risk of injury. This approach is central to the Manual Handling Regulations. It must be remembered that these regulations set no specific weight limits.

Manual handling is a major cause of accidents/incident. Although many of the injuries are to the lower back, other parts of the body can be equally affected.

These injuries include:

- strains and sprains - muscles and joints can be injured by over-exertion;
- fractures - dropping a heavy load onto the feet can break bones;
- wounds - from handling objects with sharp edges and rough surfaces;
- hernias- the strain of lifting can cause painful ruptures in the abdominal wall
- spinal injuries - damage to the vertebrae and the spinal cord can cause permanent disability.

Manual handling work-related injuries do not just happen to people working in industries associated with 'heavy work'. They affect both employees and non-employees in all industries and services. These injuries do not only cause pain, disability and suffering; they are also costly to the employer, due to disruption, sickness payments, the cost of cover and escalating compensation claims leading to increased insurance premiums. Hazardous lifting must be avoided whenever possible. However, the total avoidance of manual handling, lifting and moving tasks may not be feasible.

Further details of solutions that will help you to avoid or minimise manual handling activities including inanimate objects can be found in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publication '*Manual Handling - Solutions You Can Handle*' ISBN 0717606937

Definitions

i) Manual Handling Operations Regulations

Define manual handling operations as the transport or supporting of a load (including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling carrying or moving) by hand or bodily force.

ii) Assessment

Is a methodical procedure to critically identify any - **Hazards** (anything that has the potential to cause injury or damage) or **Risks** (the likelihood of the hazard being realised) and establishing Control measures (methods or equipment to eliminate or reduce injury or damage) An assessment is not an end in itself, merely a structured way of analysing risks and pointing the way to practical solutions.

iii) Effective Safe System:

- (i) avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable;
- (ii) make suitable and sufficient assessments where handling operations cannot be avoid
- (iii) reduce risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Assessment

The manager will carry out risk assessments on all manual handling tasks to establish safe systems of work to eliminate or reduce hazards / risks to the lowest level practicable.

During the assessment process, the manager must consult with the individuals carrying out the manual-handling task. These assessments will be reviewed annually or when changes have been made to legislation and good practices, an incident/injury has occurred or when there are changes in the ability of the person to lift and move a load Those expected to lift in the course of their work will be trained in good practice relevant to their manual handling activities.

The manager will be required to carry out all manual handling risk assessments, and provide the necessary training in ergonomic principles of moving and handling. This includes those employees or volunteers who work away from base. All staff will require training in the safe systems of work appropriate to their working environment see appendixes 2, 3 and 4.

All risk assessments must be recorded on PCC standard form - Appendix 5

i) Moving / Handling of static loads

When carrying out an assessment, the manager must consider the following factors:

- **THE TASK** does it involve holding the load away from the trunk, twisting, stooping reaching upwards, carrying for long distances, pushing, pulling, insufficient rest or recovery breaks?
- **THE LOAD** is it heavy, bulky, difficult to grasp, unstable or intrinsically harmful (sharp edges/hot)?
- **THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT** are there constraints on posture, poor floors various levels and steps, extremes in temperatures and humidity, poor lighting levels
- **THE INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITY** does the job require unusual capabilities is it hazardous to those with existing health problems, hazardous to those who are pregnant and is specific training required?

Further details of solutions that will help you to avoid or minimise manual handling activities and can be found in the HSE/HSC publications -'Getting to Grips With Handling Problems' (ISBN 717606228) and 'Guidance on Manual Handling of Loads in the Health Services' (ISBN 0717604306).

ii) Generic Assessments

It may be possible to group certain manual handling activities together, to produce a general assessment. This is known as generic assessments. Activities may involve the moving of furniture for cleaning, handling of laundry, cooking operations or assisting a service user to shop etc However the manager carrying out the assessment must ensure that all the significant factors that may contribute to injury are covered in every operation. Otherwise the use of a blanket assessment will not be appropriate and individual assessments will be required to comply with MHOR.

The procedure to undertaken to develop a generic assessment includes: -

- A practical risk assessment survey form enabling objective recording of essential information on objects, how the task is to be performed, what control measures are to be taken to reduce/eliminate, the abilities of risk assessors and what training is required, and does it allow for classification of level of risk (low, medium or high).
- Clear lines of communication.
- Clearly define responsibilities at each stage of the assessment procedure.
- Clear guidelines on risk evaluation and effective methods of risk reduction.
- Requirements to effect safe systems of work.

- Establish an action programme to deal with the evaluated risk;
 - i. Agree on methodology for assessments and plan against an agreed time scale;
 - ii. Provide adequate resources for carrying out the assessments and its implication;
 - iii. Train designated risk assessors.

- A review:
 - i. risk assessment procedure;
 - ii. risk reduction methods;
 - iii. risk assessment forms
 - iv. accident information.

iii) Preventative Measures

Once an assessment has been made using the attached form (appendix 5), reasonable practicable steps must be taken to reduce or remove factors contributing towards a risk of injury as identified by the risk assessment, such as the changing of storage systems, splitting bulk deliveries into smaller loads, introducing mechanical assistance such as trolleys, hoists, etc. Assessments will be reviewed annually or immediately following an incident/accident, or when changes have occurred. This is to ensure that the measures taken remain adequate and effective. A review is needed if there are any significant changes in the assessed work activity, such as changes in the type of load, introduction of new equipment or changes in the capabilities or expertise levels of personnel.

Responsibilities of Employees and Others

Employees already have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and any other person, who might be affected by the things that they do and do not do. They are legally required to co-operate with PCC and risk assessors, to ensure compliance with various duties imposed by legislation. In addition, they must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided for reasons of health and safety. The MHOR reinforces this obligation, in respect to manual handling activities, and employees and others are specifically required to co-operate with their line manager, by giving all relevant information regarding how the job is normally carried out. This includes any 'shortcuts' or unorthodox practices'.

All workers must co-operate when measures are being introduced to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury etc. They must provide comment on how these measures are working and immediately notify their line manager if any equipment used in manual handling operations becomes worn, defective, or non-effective for any other reason.

Where a risk assessment has determined that equipment or clothing is necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury, those items must be used.

Employees, volunteers and others must notify the line manager of any injury, illness or condition that would contribute to the risk of injury during lifting and moving handling operations such as pregnancy or an existing skeletal or muscular problem. The line manager in turn will seek advice as to whether or not the employee is able to safely continue undertaking such operations See appendix I for information to reduce accidents.

Equipment

Appropriate equipment must be purchased. It is essential that a contract be negotiated for regular service and maintenance for each item where necessary. Faults must be reported immediately and defective items labelled and not used until repaired.

Safe Systems of Work

Managers will give clear guidance to employees and volunteers when any object requires lifting, moving or supporting.

All who undertake manual handling will be provided with appropriate training in manual handling and moving, relevant to their job BEFORE undertaking such tasks. Refresher training will be given periodically to ensure all have continuing competence. This also extends to those who have transferred internally.

Should the ability of any person to handle or move safely become affected by anything, they must seek advice from their line manager or from the regional personnel manager. No person shall be required to lift, move, carry or push any load on their own that they consider too heavy for them.

Where necessary appropriate, mechanical lifting equipment will be provided and used. It will be maintained in a sound condition following manufacture's recommendations and appropriate training given in its use. Before any manual handling or lifting is carried out; suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent Moving and Handling Skills Instructor the assessment will be recorded on the appropriate form (appendix 5), taking into account the load, the environment, individual capabilities and any other relevant factors.

All those engaged in moving and handling will ensure they wear appropriate clothing and footwear that promotes safe moving and handling of service users, loads or equipment.

Appropriate up-to-date publicity material to be displayed to remind and promote good safety in manual handling. In the event of a manual handling related injury or incident, the appropriate line manager will undertake a full investigation and ensure that: -

(i) complete an accident form in accordance with established procedures and if appropriate with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

ii) recommend remedial action and record what actions have been taken. Statistics on accidents/incident relating to manual handling will be collated and made available to managers on a regular basis by the regional health and safety adviser. The Head of health and safety will review procedures and practices relating to manual handling as necessary.

The manager will assess the manual handling activities of all employees and volunteers and will consult with specialist personnel, as part of the overall duty of ensuring safe working conditions and ensuring that all understand their role and responsibilities. Managers must correct staff in cases of inappropriate lifting or handling techniques, including in the use of any equipment.

The provision of protective equipment will be kept under review and comply with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations.

Training

Appropriate, relevant information and training will be given to all who are expected to carry out manual handling. This training will include health and safety aspects relating to lifting and handling within the scope of the Manual Handling Operations Regulation and the measures taken by PCC to comply with them. The contents of the training package will focus on good handling techniques and be tailored to the handling operations appropriate for the work undertaken.

It is the responsibility of the service manager or other appropriate manager to ensure that all staff and other persons at their work location receive suitable training. Those involved in moving and lifting will be given all available relevant information.

Training will include the following and all appropriate records will be kept:

- Back Care
- Ergonomics
- Handling Aids
- Mechanical Handling Devices
- Manual Handling Techniques
- Fitness
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations

Review

The Head of Health and Safety will:

- (a) Monitor the operation of this procedural arrangement;
- (b) Develop manual handling training with appropriate personnel;
- (c) Provide advice to managers on assessments and safe systems of work;
- (d) Review and revise this procedural arrangement

Appendix I Reduction of Accidents

The intention of MHOR is to set out a framework to reduce the risk of accidents and physical injury that arise from moving things in the wrong way. There are four main causes of injury.

Degeneration

The normal ageing process produces 'wear and tear' in all the weight bearing joints and muscles of the body. The degree of degeneration varies from individual to individual and may be accelerated by factors, such as participation in the sport of weight lifting or the additional stresses placed by being over-weight.

Traumatic Injury

This is caused by sudden, violent stresses applied resulting in damage to the bones, muscles, ligaments, vertebrae and inter-vertebral discs. This type of injury is often caused by poor lifting and handling techniques, for example during a team lift, when a co-lifter fails to lift or releases a supported load.

Cumulative Strain

This condition is probably the most common cause of injury but the least recognised. It is due to regularly being subjected to minor stresses; for instance those caused by poor posture, and poorly designed work environments. Many injuries are cumulative, rather than being directly attributable to any particular manual-handling incident. Because of the gradual onset, they are often not recognised until it is too late and the damage is irreversible. It is essential that all persons involved in manual handling activities see their doctor if they experience any symptoms, such as pain or stiffness that could indicate problems.

Psychological

Psychological pain with no physical symptoms may occur in cases of hysteria, depression or acute anxiety. It has been shown that stress may be a predisposing factor to the likelihood of back injury through an accident. Chronic pain sufferers may become depressed and experience exaggerated pain perception.

Appendix 2 Principles of Good Ergonomic Manual Handling

The following is an example of good ergonomic principles, adapted appropriately for lifting a load. It should be considered as good manual handling and integrated into all lifting, moving and handling activities:

Planning

Before attempting to lift any load you must refer to the relevant Moving and handling assessment then consider whether you can manage it, its position, size, shape, weight, local environment and other relevant factors and compare these to your capabilities and knowledge. If you are not certain that you can lift the load safely, use a mechanical aid instead of manual handling, or get help from another person(s). Think about the lift carefully and decide the safest way of performing it. Do you need any protective clothing or equipment? Is the carry route clear and safe to use? Consult with your supervisor if necessary.

The Body

The body should be as close to the load as possible avoiding a top-heavy bending where the legs are kept straight, the body is inclined acutely forwards with the back bent. This results in the back being used for lifting, instead of the muscles in the legs. The latter causes a high risk of a prolapsed inter-vertebral disk problem.

Safest Lifting Zone

The safest lifting zone for handlers, when they are standing, extends from mid-thigh to shoulder height. If you carry out lifting operations below mid-thigh or above your shoulders there is a higher risk of injury. Lifting from the floor should be avoided whenever possible and even more importantly loads should not be lifted directly from the floor to above shoulder height. Break-up such a lift into two or more stages. Storage facilities should be arranged to avoid the necessity for this type of lift.

Minimal manual handling risk assessment of an Appendix 5 inanimate object

Reference number: _____ Date of assessment: _____

Type of assessment: individual or generic

Location: _____ Home: _____

Description of operation(s) covered by this assessment

Frequency of task: _____ Details of any PPE: _____

Factors to Consider	Yes/No	Level of Risk Low	Level of Risk Medium	Level of Risk High
Does the Task involve?				
Holding loads away from the body?				
Twisting?				
Stooping?				
Bending Backwards?				
Reaching Upwards?				
Does The Task Involve Throwing etc.?				
Sudden Movement Of The Load?				
Excessive Lifting or Lowering Distances?				
Long Carrying Distance?				
Strenuous Pushing or Pulling?				
Unpredictable Movement of Load?				
Repetitive Handling?				
Insufficient Rest or Recovery?				
Team Handling?				
Handling While Seated?				
Having The Weight Of The Body Unevenly Distributed?				
Standing With The Feet Too Close Together?				
Holding The Load To The Side Of The Body With One Hand?				
Frequent Or Prolonged Physical Effort?				

The Load

Factors to Consider Is the Load	Yes / No	Level of Risk Low	Level of Risk Medium	Level of Risk High
Heavy? Please record weight of the object in the box				
Bulky/Unwieldy?				
Difficult to Grasp?				
Sharp?				
Hot?/?/Cold?				
Slippery?				
Toxic?				

The Working Environment

Factors to Consider Are There	Yes / No	Level of Risk Low	Level of Risk Medium	Level of Risk High
Constraints on Posture?				
Noise Levels That Impair Communication During Team Lift?				
Uneven Or Unstable Floors?				
Variation on Levels?				
Hot?/?/Cold?/Humid? Conditions?				
Windy Conditions				

