

Manual Handling Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Manual handling is any action that involves movement of a load such as a person or inanimate object by hand or bodily force also referred to as 'moving and handling'. This includes activities such as lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying and supporting a load.

This policy relates to the risks from moving and handling of loads or inanimate objects only. The policy relating to moving and assisting pupils is covered in the separate policy 'Physical Intervention Policy'.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) were introduced to reduce the risk of injury from Manual Handling. The regulations apply to all employers and workplaces. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced guidance on the regulations (L23) to assist employers to comply with the requirements this document forms the basis for this policy and guidance.

Manual handling accidents account for more than a third of all accidents reported each year to the enforcing authorities. A survey of self-reported work-related illness estimated that in 2001/02, 1.1 million people in Great Britain suffered from musculoskeletal disorders caused or made worse by their current or past work. An estimated 11.6 million working days a year are lost due to work-related musculoskeletal disorders. In 1995/6 these injuries cost society £5.7 billion. (*Health and Safety Executive L23, HSE Statistics 2009/10*)

All school staff are involved in the moving and handling of loads or objects to some extent in their job in whichever directorate they work. The tasks can range from carrying files or equipment in the office (or between sites) to more strenuous tasks involving lifting heavy objects such as furniture, using heavy equipment or being engaged in repetitive handling tasks. It is not possible to totally eliminate all manual handling but by implementing best practice guidance set out in this policy the school will endeavour to minimise the potential risks and maintain a fit and healthy workforce.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to implement the requirements of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and eliminate and reduce the risk of injuries and ill health which may be attributable to work related manual handling tasks. This will be achieved under the employer's duties by ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that:

Hazardous manual handling operations are avoided so far as is reasonably practicable.

Hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided are assessed. The main causes of musculoskeletal injuries and work related ill health is identified through the assessment process and risks reduced by implementing effective control measures.

Suitable manual handling training and information is provided to reduce the risk of injury to employees and any other personnel who are involved in manual handling operation either for, on behalf of or in partnership with the school.

3. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all school staff and volunteers.

Where the school is responsible for organising activities which involve significant manual handling tasks appropriate risk assessments and procedures to minimise the risk of injury will be produced using the information in this policy and supporting guidance.

Applicable Legislation – Click each heading to see further details

- [Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 \(as amended 2002\)](#)
- [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 \(LOLER\)](#)
- [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#)

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body

The Governing Body retain the overall accountability within the organisation for the implementation of the policy. This includes for example, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher and school business manager, ensuring that sufficient resources are made available for the purchase of moving and handling equipment, the provision of training for all staff and the availability of specialist staff to support the risk assessment process.

Employees

All employees have duties under the Health and Safety at Work act and Manual Handling Operations regulations. Therefore they must:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and that of others who may be affected by their activities.
- Co-operate with their employers to enable them to comply with their health and safety duties.
- Attend or complete manual handling training as identified through the risk assessment.
- Follow safe systems of work and follow instructions provided for their safety, employee to read [Appendix D POEL29](#).
- Make proper use of equipment provided for manual handling, report defects or faults eg trolleys, barrows.
- Inform the employer if they identify any hazardous manual handling activities in their work or hazards which affect manual handling e.g. environmental issues.
- Report accidents and incidents according to the council's arrangements.

Occupational Health Provider

The aim of the County Council's contracted Occupational Health service is to support the council to ensure that employees are medically suitable for their work and that the working environment is suitable.

Physiotherapy referral and occupational health practitioners are on hand to provide workplace health advice to managers and employees to ensure that health issues related to manual handling activities can be addressed.

5. MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT - PROCEDURE

Before carrying out any manual handling, employees must:

- **Assess** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided and;

- **Reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.

In the first instance, employees should consider whether the manual handling task can be avoided by:

Eliminating hazardous manual handling of loads by employees altogether i.e.:

- Does the load need to be moved at all? Can the activity (e.g. minor repairs to a large item) be carried out where the item is?
- Can the task be done in a different way?

Hazardous moving and handling operations must be avoided or assessed. There is no such thing as a completely 'safe' manual handling operation. But working within the guidelines will cut the risk and reduce the need for a more detailed assessment. Tasks within these guidelines do not generally require any further action and nothing need be recorded, unless those involved have existing health problems or are pregnant.

Are you saying I mustn't exceed the guidelines?

No. The risk assessment guidelines are not 'safe limits' for lifting. But work outside the guidelines is likely to increase the risk of injury, so you should examine it closely for possible improvements. You should remember that you must make the work less demanding if it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Your main duty is to avoid lifting operations that involve a risk of injury. Where it is not practicable to do this you should assess each lifting operation and reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable. As the risk of injury goes up you must look at the operation increasingly closely to make sure it has been properly assessed and the risk of injury has been reduced.

Tasks outside these guidelines must be avoided or assessed to identify the measures necessary to reduce the risks. Look out for tasks that involve bad postures, handling loads away from the body or from low and high levels, cramped work areas, awkward or heavy loads. A box of A4 paper typically weighs 11kg, therefore tasks involving lifting these from floor level require an assessment.

For guidance on assessing the risks from **PUSHING & PULLING** loads see Appendix A.

Documentation/forms to be used

An assessment need not be recorded if it could very easily be repeated and explained at any time because it is simple and obvious; or if the handling operations are low risk, and are going to last a very short time.

An example generic manual handling risk assessment for typical moving and handling tasks are available in Appendix B. In the case of expectant mothers, an individual pregnancy risk assessment will be in place and will specify that no lifting of heavy or awkward objects should take place.

Managers must review generic risk assessments in place if individual employees report adverse symptoms, become ill, injured or disabled, or return following a long period of sickness, as they may have become vulnerable to risk.

They may need to carry out individual risk assessments for employees with a disability to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Where a significant risk of injury is identified a separate detailed risk assessment is required. Appendix C contains information on problems to look for when completing a risk assessment.

All employees covered by a risk assessment (including generic assessments) should be told about the risks it identified and understand and implement the control measures that are necessary. The assessment should be recorded, either in writing or be available electronically, separate written/typed task instructions or safe systems of work may also be necessary.

Completing a Manual Handling Risk Assessment

A manual handling assessment should focus on five key factors associated with the manual handling task often referred to as the 'TILE O' assessment:

- The **T**ask and what the manual handling operation involves
- The **I**ndividual i.e. the person's individual capability to carry out the task
- The **L**oad the object weight, size, stability etc
- The **E**nvironment weather conditions, slip, trip falling hazards
- **O**ther factors e.g. organisational factors e.g. time of activity, PPE interfering with movement, work equipment

How do employees know if there's a risk of injury?

It's a matter of judgement in each case, but there are certain things to look out for, such as people puffing and sweating, excessive fatigue, bad posture, cramped work areas, awkward or heavy loads or a history of back trouble. High accident or absence rates may also be an indicator to problems. Employees can often highlight which activities are unpopular, difficult or hard work.

Employees should not be expected to carry out any operation which they consider to be beyond their individual capability.

Where significant changes occur or accidents or injuries are reported the assessments and the measures to reduce the risks must be reviewed.

A good rule of thumb to use is "The effort and energy i.e. strain, stretching, twisting, bending is needed to perform a manual handling operation, the greater the risk of injury".

Ergonomics

When considering moving and handling, managers also need to consider the 'ergonomics' related to the task. The Health and Safety Executive closely aligns ergonomics with the requirements of the manual handling regulations.

'Ergonomics is a science concerned with the 'fit' between people and their work. It puts people first, taking account of their capabilities and limitations. Ergonomics aims to make sure that tasks, equipment, information and the environment suit each worker.

To assess the fit between a person and their work, ergonomists have to consider many aspects. These include:

- The job being done and the demands on the worker;
- the equipment used (its size, shape, and how appropriate it is for the task);
- the information used (how it is presented, accessed, and changed);
- the physical environment (temperature, humidity, lighting, noise, vibration); and
- the social environment (such as teamwork and supportive management).

Ergonomists consider all the physical aspects of a person, such as:

- body size and shape;
- fitness and strength;
- posture;
- the senses, especially vision, hearing and touch; and
- the stresses and strains on muscles, joints, nerves.

Ergonomists also consider the psychological aspects of a person, such as:

- mental abilities;
- personality;
- knowledge; and
- experience.

By assessing these aspects of people, their jobs, equipment, and working environment and the interaction between them, ergonomists are able to design safe, effective and productive work system.

6. TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Training is a key requirement of the regulations to ensure that employees have sufficient information on the potential risks of manual handling and how to eliminate or reduce them.

Manual handling training is provided to all staff as part of the INSET training. Please speak to the School Business Manager if you have not completed it.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The risk assessment should be reviewed if any significant factors change or if manual handling accidents or injuries are reported. High levels of absence may also indicate that there is a problem and should trigger a review which may need further specialist advice.

All manual handling accidents must be reported in line with the LCC accident and incident reporting procedure. Accidents involving manual handling will be investigated by the line manager/supervisor seeking assistance from the Health and Safety team where necessary.

Non compliance by employees will need to be addressed following the council disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

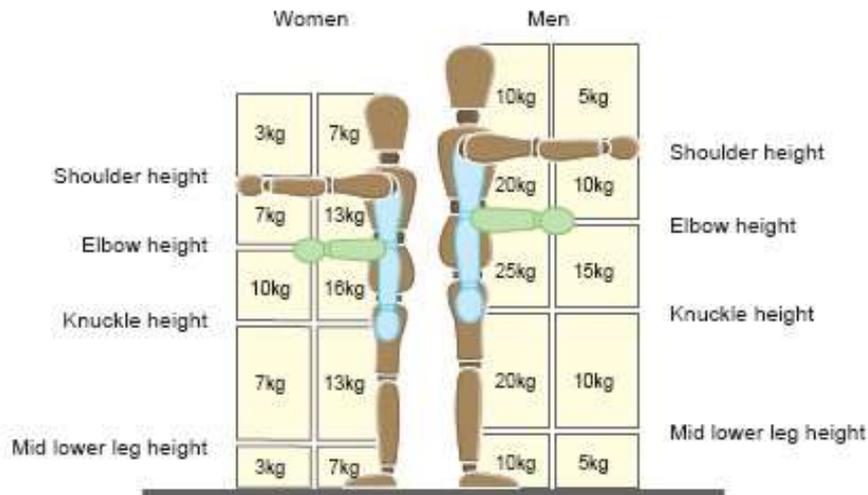
Periodic monitoring will also be carried out through Health and Safety Audits and inspections carried out by the H&S team.

Compliance with the policy, accident absence statistics reports and significant risks will be reported to the Directorate/Corporate Risk and Safety Group and be recorded in the Annual Directorate Risk and Safety Report.

APPENDIX A

General Risk Assessment Guidelines

(INDG143 (rev2) Getting to Grips with Manual Handling) Health and Safety Executive



8. Lifting and lowering diagram

- Use the diagram to make a quick and easy assessment. Each box contains a guideline weight for lifting and lowering in that zone. (As you can see, the guideline weights are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to occur.)
- Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to the diagram. First, decide which box or boxes the lifter's hands pass through when moving the load. Then, assess the maximum weight being handled. If it is less than the figure given in the box, the operation is within the guidelines.
- If the lifter's hands enter more than one box during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between boxes.
- The guideline weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the lifter in a stable body position.

9. Twisting

□ Reduce the guideline weights if the handler twists to the side during the operation. As a rough guide, reduce them by 10% if the handler twists beyond 45°, and by 20% if the handler twists beyond 90°.

10. Frequent lifting and lowering

□ The guideline weights are for infrequent operations - up to about 30 operations per hour - where the pace of work is not forced, adequate pauses to rest or use different muscles are possible, and the load is not supported by the handler for any length of time. Reduce the weights if the operation is repeated more often. As a rough guide, reduce the weights by 30% if the operation is repeated once or twice per minute, by 50% if the operation is repeated five to eight times a minute, and by 80% where the operation is repeated more than 12 times a minute.

11. Pushing and pulling

(INDG143 (rev2) Getting to Grips with Manual Handling) Health and Safety Executive

The task is within the guidelines if the following figures are not exceeded:

	Men	Women
Force to stop or start the load	20 kg	15 kg
Sustained force to keep the load in motion	10 kg	7 kg

For further information and examples of forces required to push or pull loads see [INDG143](#) - „Good handling technique for pushing and pulling“

Using the results: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?

Using the diagram is a first step. If it shows the manual handling is within the guideline figures (bearing in mind the reduced limits for twisting and for frequent lifts) you need not do any more in most cases. But you will need to make a more detailed assessment if:

- the conditions given for using the guidelines (e.g. that the load can be readily grasped with both hands) are not met;
- the person doing the lifting has reduced capacity, e.g. through ill health or pregnancy;
- the handling operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes in the diagram; or
- the guideline figures in the diagram are exceeded.

For pushing and pulling, you should make a more detailed assessment if:

- there are extra risk factors like uneven floors or confined spaces;
- the worker can't push or pull the load with their hands between knuckle and shoulder height;
- the load has to be moved for more than about 20 m without a break; or □ the guideline figures in the table are likely to be exceeded.

For further advice on how to make a more detailed assessment see:

- [HSE - Pushing & Pulling "Planning an Assessment" webpage](#)
- [HSE – Pushing & Pulling "Doing an Assessment" webpage](#)
- [HSE – Pushing & Pulling of loads: Assessment checklist](#)
- [HSE – Pushing & Pulling of loads: Assessment checklist \(example\)](#)

Date of approval:

Signed (Executive Headteacher)

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Date of review:

APPENDIX B

MODEL GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT - MANUAL HANDLING OF LOADS

ODEL GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT - MOVING LOADS/OBJECTS IN AN OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Directorate	Resources Business Support	Area/Activities	Moving and Handling of Loads in Offices	Carried out by	Manager	Date:	January 2011	Sheet 1 of 4
Hazards		Who might be harmed	Existing Controls (Or proposed controls in the case of a new activity)		*Risk rating with existing or proposed controls	Are risks adequately controlled Yes/No	If No, what further actions are required to reduce the risks	
Occasional lifting and carrying of boxes, files, stationery and small equipment in office locations. Risk of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • musculoskeletal disorders • injuries to feet from falling objects • cuts, bruises • falls injuries 		Employees (Trainees Students Temporary Staff Volunteers)	Managers/employees to refer to G28 guidance A copy of POEL 29 to be available to all employees and at induction. Employees to inform manager of any health conditions which may affect ability to move and handle objects. Manager to carry out individual assessment if problems reported if necessary revise/restrict moving and handling tasks until further advice from occupational health obtained. Manual Handling training* to be arranged or completed for all employees, Records to be kept. Employees to follow good handling techniques as detailed in POEL 29 eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide/use barrows or trolleys check in good working order • Break down loads • Get assistance eg with doors • Adopt team lift for heavier items • Consider environment • Is PPE required? Eg Gloves/safety boots Employees to report hazards or if accidents occur.		Likelihood 3 Severity 2 Risk = 3 x 2 = 6	Yes	Significant moving and handling tasks to be assessed in detail considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task • Load • Individual Capability¹ ie <i>those with medical conditions or disability, young workers or pregnant workers</i> • Environment • Other factors such as PPE or equipment *Training for office staff eg Induction Local instructions Short training course Online training ¹ Managers to obtain advice from Occupational Health where necessary.	

*Risk Rating	Likelihood of Occurrence x Severity of Harm
Likelihood of Occurrence	1 Rare, 2 Unlikely, 3 Moderate, 4 Likely, 5 Almost certain
Severity of injury	1 Minor, 2 Moderate, 3 Significant, 4 Major, 5 Catastrophic

Appendix C problems to look for when completing risk assessment

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury	Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>The tasks, do they involve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ holding loads away from the body? ■ twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? ■ large vertical movement? ■ long carrying distances? ■ strenuous pushing or pulling? ■ repetitive handling? ■ insufficient rest or recovery time? ■ a work rate imposed by a process? 	<p><i>Can 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>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>Can 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?') <p>Get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to.</p>
<p><i>The loads, are they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ heavy, bulky or unwieldy? ■ 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>Can you make the load:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lighter or less bulky? ■ easier to grasp? ■ more stable? ■ less damaging to hold? <p>If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg provide handles or smaller packages?</p>	<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 order and comfortable? ■ are there any brakes? If so, do they work? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>The working environment, are there:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ constraints on posture? ■ bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? ■ variations in levels? ■ hot/cold/humid conditions? ■ gusts of wind or other strong air movements? ■ poor lighting conditions? ■ restrictions on movements or posture from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? 	<p><i>Can 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? ■ provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? ■ ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for their work? 	<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>Can 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?