



**THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM**

Health and Safety Policy

MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS

UHSP/6/MHO/95

This document sets out in more detail the arrangements for compliance with University Health and Safety Policy at Budget Centre level and it gives guidance on how these requirements may be met. This document forms a part of the University Health and Safety Policy. It has been approved by the Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, and it will be subject to review.

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MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The *Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992* require precautions to be taken to minimise the risk to health from manual handling operations. Ill health due to manual handling operations is one of the main causes of time loss at the University.

This Policy is based on guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive and local experience.

The task of implementing this policy rests with Heads of Budget Centres.

Definition of Manual Handling Operations:

A manual handling operation is any transporting or supporting of a load by hand or bodily force. Operations include lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or other means of moving a load.

Scope of this document:

This Policy covers all manual handling operations carried on in connection with University activities, whether on the campus or elsewhere.

POLICY

Heads of Budget Centres are responsible for making arrangements to ensure that:

- an assessment is made of all manual handling operations within their area of control;
- manual handling operations that may give rise to personal injury or ill health are eliminated where possible;
- where it is not possible to eliminate manual handling operations that might give rise to injury or ill health steps are taken to minimise the risk;
- when the Budget Centre is notified by a female member of staff that she is pregnant or has given birth within the previous six months, the Health and Safety Unit is consulted on any necessary changes to her manual handling operations;
- any person carrying out manual handling assessments is nominated by the Head of Budget Centre to do so;
- sufficient instruction and training are given to any person carrying out manual handling assessments;
- sufficient instruction and training are given to all staff who carry out manual handling operations;
- there is a review procedure for assessments of manual handling operations which may change;
- the effectiveness of the policy is monitored.

Persons carrying out Manual Handling Operations must ensure that they:

- make full and proper use of any systems of work and equipment provided for their use in manual handling operations;
- participate in manual handling training as required;
- report to their supervisor or manager any problems or changes in their health, which may be affected by manual handling operations;

- report to their supervisor or manager any manual handling hazards/risks or defective mechanical aids within their workplace that they become aware of that may affect manual handling operations.

The University Health and Safety Unit will:

- screen all Pre-employment Medical Questionnaires to ensure that where there is a likelihood of significant work involving manual handling operations, it does not put an employee's health at risk;
- provide health checks where appropriate for staff returning to work after sickness absence to assess their fitness to carry out such manual handling tasks as would normally be expected of them and advise supervisors or managers if adjustments to the task, equipment or work pattern are needed;
- provide advice to Budget Centres and individuals on any necessary changes to manual handling operations following notification of pregnancy or recent birth or conditions of ill-health;
- organise the necessary training.

MANUAL HANDLING ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The Risk/Action Matrix

The hazard summary section shares similar features to the Hazard and Risk Assessment form. Manual handling injuries range from back discomfort and possibly a few days sick leave to permanent discomfort and disability. All manual handling injuries can be considered major. The number of injuries relates to the likelihood of injury for a particular task and the number of times it is performed, i.e., its frequency.

- The likelihood of injury is determined by the number of risk factors and their severity. A rough guide to the number of risks and their likelihood of injury is shown below

Number of risk factors	Likelihood of injury
1 to 2	Remote
3 to 4	Possible
5 to 6	Probable
More than 6	Yes/High

- The guide must only be used as a rough indicator for the assessment. If the risk is deemed to be especially high the likelihood of injury will be appropriately higher. For example, attempting to lift 80 kg with no other risks other than weight (i.e., a 1 risk), the likelihood of injury would be probable.

Frequency is more easily determined. The table below gives a rough guide to definitions of terms used on the checklist:

Number of Tasks	Frequency
More than once per day	Very
Between once a day and once a week	Fairly
Less than once a week	Rarely

It is important to take into consideration the period for which the tasks are performed. For example a seasonal task only taking place one week in a year, but during that period it must be performed more than once per day. The task would therefore be considered very frequent. Again, assessor judgement is required.

- The Risk/Action matrix relates the likelihood of injury and the frequency to the Risk/Action level. Reading from the matrix, the appropriate Risk/Action level can be chosen. For example, for a task with a probable likelihood of injury which is performed often (frequency), a second priority action level should be recommended.

Solutions - Risk Reduction Measures

It is important that the whole manual handling task is examined when you are looking at means of reducing risk. The following are a number of points which should be considered. Further information can be obtained from *Manual Handling GUIDANCE ON THE REGULATIONS* published by the Health and Safety Executive (ISBN 0-11-886335-5).

Can the task be eliminated - for example, by contracting out the task or by getting goods delivered direct to the point of use?

Take an **ergonomic** approach to the task - examine all the factors including the task, the load, the environment, individual capability and how these factors interact.

Task - look at the task in the context of the whole work area. Can you change the task layout to reduce excessive carrying distances, change the work routine to allow adequate rest breaks.

Load - how can the load be made lighter, can the size or nature of the load be changed to allow easier handling? Is the container designed for ease of handling, for example, does it have finger grips?

Working Environment - are there any factors in the environment constraining an individual's ability to lift, for example, carrying up and down stairs, poor lighting, doors or other obstructions?

Individual Capability - does the task require any particular personal attributes. Account must be taken of an individual's height, age, sex and general level of fitness. Do any staff have a condition, such as pregnancy or recent child birth or ill-health, which may affect their ability to handle loads? This does not mean removing people from tasks, rather look at other means of reducing the risk of injury.

Knowledge of the Task - does the person who is carrying out the manual handling task know the task well. Ask them for information about the task and if they have any ideas on how to improve it.

Lifting Devices - would the introduction of lifting devices reduce the risk of injury? For example, a scissor lift truck could be used for moving audio visual equipment or heavy laboratory equipment. The truck has the advantage that the height is adjustable to allow objects to be moved from a table to the truck without lifting.

Slip mats under computers can also alleviate the need to lift heavy objects.

However, it is vital that training is given to people who are using lifting devices and any such devices are kept well maintained.

Training - training is important in all manual handling tasks, but training **should not** be a substitute for changing the task if the task has a high risk level. Training should include risk awareness, how to do work safely and how to use any equipment provided. Refresher training should be provided from time to time.

MANUAL HANDLING ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Assessment Summary

Activity Assessed

Assessment No.

School/Department

Date

Location of Activity

Assessor

Risk Factors	Risk (Y/N)	Notes
THE TASK		
Holding load away from trunk		
Twisting		
Stooping		
Reaching upwards		
Excessive lifting or lowering		
Excessive carrying		
Excessive pushing or pulling		
Unpredictable movement		
Frequent or prolonged effort		
Insufficient rest/recovery		
Work rate imposed		
Handling while seated		
Team handling		
THE INDIVIDUAL		
Unusual strength or height needed		
Risk due to pregnancy		
Risk due to health		
Training required		
THE LOAD		
Heavy		
Bulky		
Difficult to grasp		
Unstable		
Sharp, hot or damaging		
THE ENVIRONMENT		
Space Constraints		
Flooring		
Variation in floor levels		
Extremes of temperature		
Ventilation problems		
Poor lighting		
OTHER FACTORS		
PPE and other clothing		

Persons at Risk (tick one box)

Staff Student Contractor Visitor Patient General Public

Likelihood of Injury (tick one box)

Yes/High Probable Possible Remote

Frequency (tick one box)

Very Fairly Rarely

Risk Action Matrix

Frequency	Likelihood of Injury			
	Yes/High	Probable	Possible	Remote
Very	1	2	2	3
Fairly	2	2	3	3
Rarely	3	3	3	4

KEY	Priority Action	
1	1st Priority Action	(Immediate Action)
2	2nd Priority Action	(As soon as possible)
3	3rd Priority Action	
4	Risk OK, no action	

Risk Action Level (tick one box)

1st Priority 2nd Priority 3rd Priority Risk OK

Action to be taken

Date for Action

Action completed

Action By

by (Name and date)