



# Manual Handling Operations Policy & Guidance

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<b>Links and Dependencies</b>
Manual Handling Operations Regulations
HSE ACOP Moving and handling

## **1. Introduction**

This policy and guidance applies to all manual handling operations carried out by employees of Derbyshire County Council.

The aim is to provide guidance on measures to:-

- ❑ Avoid as far as is reasonably practical manual handling operations which involves a risk of any person being injured.
- ❑ Make suitable and sufficient assessment of hazardous manual handling operations which cannot be avoided taking account of the task, load, working environment and individual capabilities.
- ❑ Reduce the risk of injury to any person to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
- ❑ Consult, inform and train employees involved in manual handling operations.

## **2. Policy Statement**

The Council recognises its statutory duties as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations and will draw on any detailed guidance and approved Codes of Practice issued by the Health and Safety Executive, to prevent any bodily injury caused by manual handling operations.

The Council shall ensure that Strategic Directors within Departments have responsibility to ensure that arrangements are made to implement the following:-

- ❑ Avoid manual handling which involves risk of injury wherever it is reasonably practicable.
- ❑ Carry out assessments for all manual handling operations.
- ❑ Record all relevant assessments.
- ❑ Review assessments as required.
- ❑ Provide adequate information, instruction and training to employees.

### **3. Manager's Guidelines**

- **Possible effects on health**

Manual handling operations account for more than a quarter of all accidents reported to the enforcing authorities. It has been a common misconception that manual handling problems are directly associated with heavy industry but, in fact, all sections are affected with high manual handling accident figures.

Many of these accidents involve 'major injury' categories such as fractured limbs and a high percentage result in 'over three day' absences from work often caused by poor posture and excessive repetitive movements, usually caused over a period of time rather than by a single manual handling operation.

- **The main risks**

An employee may be at risk of injury through manual handling operations if they:-

- undertake manual handling activities for which an assessment has not been carried out.
- are physically unsuited for the task.
- are wearing unsuitable clothing, footwear etc.
- have not received adequate and suitable instruction and training to enable them to carry out the task safely.

Consideration should be given to employees who are young, have a medical condition that may affect their manual handling capabilities or are known to be pregnant. A specific assessment must be undertaken for these categories of employees.

- **Avoidance of manual handling**

The Regulations state that any manual handling operations which involve a risk of injury should, so far as is reasonably practicable, be avoided.

There are two practical ways to achieve this:-

- Eliminate the handling operation.
- Automate or mechanise the operation.
- **Assessment**

Where it is not possible to eliminate or mechanise the operation a manual handling assessment should be carried out. These assessments should be carried out by a 'competent' assessor who has a thorough practical understanding of the types of tasks to be performed, the loads involved and the working environment in which the manual handling operation is to be carried out. The assessment should be in written form and kept readily accessible for the period for which it is in force.

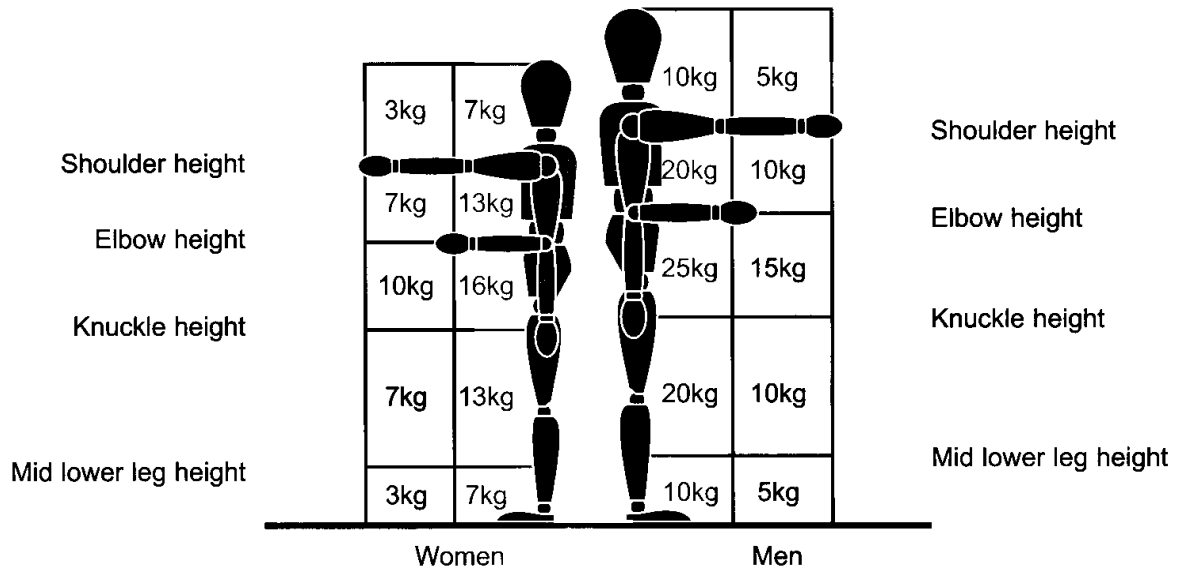
The assessment is based upon four factors:-

- Task.
- Load.
- Working environment.
- Individual capability.

See assessment proforma (attached).

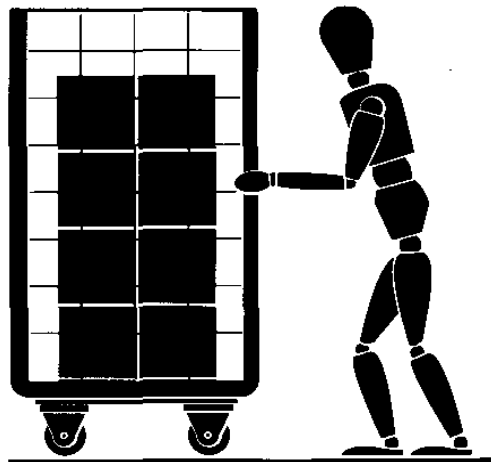
- **Recommended Lifting, Pushing and Pulling Weight Guidelines**

If the guidelines illustrated below are not exceeded then Section A of the Assessment Proforma should be completed **only**.



These are guideline weights, and their position in relation to the body, that employees should be able to move, lift and lower easily and safely. If the handlers' hands enter more than one of the box zones during the operation, then take the figure as the smallest weight shown.

If employees are handling greater weights than these, then a detailed moving and handling assessment should be undertaken.



The guideline figure for starting or stopping the load is a force of about 25 kg for men and about 16 kg for women.

There is no specific limit to the distance over which the load is pushed for pulled provided there are adequate opportunities for rest or recovery.

- **Reducing the risk of injury**

Some manual handling operations offer more scope for reducing the risk of injuries than others. Therefore, emphasis is placed upon the load itself and suitable training for those carrying out the manual-handling task.

An ergonomic approach should be adopted to enable safe design of all manual-handling techniques. Improved job and workplace design may not eliminate injuries but should greatly reduce them.

The task, load, working environment and individual capabilities must be considered to design the task to suit the employee.

Emphasis should be placed on the use of mechanical aids where reasonably practicable. These still involve some degree of manual handling but the risk of injury is reduced and efficiency increased. Examples of mechanical aids include: hoists, levers, sack truck, roller conveyor and chutes etc.

The appropriate Safety Representative and employee should be involved in redesigning any work methods and encouraged to report on its effectiveness.

## **Task**

Several factors to consider are:-

a) Improving task layout:-

Using suitable storage racks for materials at waist height etc.

b) Using the body more efficiently:-

Prevent the need for stooping and twisting by re-designing layout.

Ensure that the load can be held close to the body to reduce stresses in the back and shoulders.

Ensure good handling posture is maintained by correct body positioning, removing obstacles and keeping the area free from debris.

Use push/pull techniques wherever possible rather than lifting a load.

c) Improve work routine:-

Allow suitable rest/recovery periods for manual handling operations.

Introduce job rotation where practical which allows the muscles to relax whilst others are in use.

d) Handling whilst seated:-

An employee can handle less than in a standing position therefore avoid lifting from floor height as this will put severe strain on the lower back.

Seating should preferably have a swivel action and no casters. This ensures some freedom of movement and stability.

e) Team handling:-

Used when a load is unsafe to be handled by one person.

The team should work well together and respond to synchronised instructions. Training is essential otherwise further hazards may develop. Many injuries are caused when one person is trained to handle loads safely and the other is not.

Team members should preferably be similar in build to ensure even distribution of load stresses.

f) Personal Protective Equipment:-

Includes items such as; gloves, overalls, safety footwear etc.

All equipment provided should be well fitting and not restrict movement.

All equipment should be suitable for the task and kept in good condition (Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations).

g) Maintenance of handling equipment:-

All equipment should be well maintained and defects reported immediately. (See The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations).



## **Load**

Can it be made:-

- Lighter (specify with supplier if necessary).
- Smaller or easier to handle.
- Easier to grasp (handles or slings to get a better grip).
- More stable (prevent unexpected movement of the contents).
- Less damaging to hold (free of oil, dirt, dust etc).

## **Working Environment**

Ensure adequate space in which to carry out manual handling operations (keep gangways clear, improve housekeeping etc).

a) Floor condition:-

- Ensure that it is level, in good condition, has a non-slip surface and is free from dirt, oil etc.

b) Working at different levels:-

Wherever possible tasks should be carried out on one level. Where this is not possible the transition should be as gentle as possible with good ramps or stairs. Work benches should be at the same height to prevent the need for lowering or raising loads.

c) Thermal environment:-

Extremes of temperature and humidity should be avoided wherever possible. Where this is not practical suitable personal protective equipment should be provided.

d) Lighting:-

This should be sufficient and well positioned to enable employees to see clearly their work surroundings.

## **Individual Capability**

- Personal capacity:-

Employees who are or who have been recently pregnant and those who have health problems which affect their handling capability should receive particular consideration.

The degree of fitness and familiarity of a task should help reduce the likelihood of handling injuries, as does a suitable level of training.

- Knowledge and training:-

Knowledge and training alone does not ensure safe handling techniques.

The main objective should be to redesign the working conditions, improve the task, load and working environment as appropriate.

The task must be suited to the individual to reduce the risk of injury.

Training does, however, ensure that all employees know how to judge load suitability and use correct handling techniques.

- **Review of assessments**

The assessments should be kept up to date and reviewed by the departmental assessor when they are no longer valid, (for example, when the working conditions or personnel change). The assessment should be modified or corrected where necessary.

- **Information, instruction and training**

Training enables employees to develop good handling techniques and to develop skills which will help them recognise and either avoid or modify any hazardous handling situations.

### **Information**

Wherever possible all loads should be clearly marked with their weight. Where this is not possible employees should be given details of the loads to be handled with general indications on the weights.

In addition, if a load has a centre of gravity which is not located centrally, the heaviest side should be marked.

## **Instruction and training**

The instruction and training needs will be highlighted by the assessment and deficiencies should be rectified in order to comply with Section 2 (2) c of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The training should include practical instruction based upon the tasks of those employees concerned to emphasise the various techniques developed to reduce manual handling injuries.

This may involve the technique of judging the weight of a load by lifting one corner. Some loads are misleading; a large box may be empty and light to carry, a small box containing a portable television will be fairly heavy with a centre of gravity not centrally located.

## **4. Employee Guidelines**

You have a duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions.

It shall be the duty of all employees to:-

- Use correctly all work items provided in accordance with training and instruction given.
- Inform management of any situation which represents a serious or immediate danger to health and safety.
- Inform management of any shortcomings in the protective and preventative arrangements for health and safety.

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Manual Handling Operations Regulations**  
**Assessment Questionnaire**

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviews			
Next Review Required	Review Date	Any Changes Required	Signature

<b>Section A</b>	
<b>Job description</b>	
<p><b>Is an assessment needed?</b>          (ie is there a potential risk for injury, and are the factors beyond the limits of the guidelines?)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

If 'YES' continue. If 'NO' the assessment need go no further.

Operations covered by this assessment (detailed description)  Locations: Personnel involved: Date of assessment:	Diagrams (other information)
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**Section B – See over for detailed analysis**

<b>Section C</b>	
Overall assessment of the risk of injury?	Low <input type="checkbox"/> Med <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Section D</b>
Remedial steps that should be taken, in order of priority:

Date by which action should be taken:	
Assessor's Name:	Signature:

<b>Section B – More detailed assessment, where necessary:</b>					
Questions to consider:	If yes, tick appropriate level of risk			Problems occurring from the task (Make rough notes in this column in preparation for the possible remedial action to be taken)	Possible remedial action (Possible changes to be made to system/task, workplace/ space, load, environment. Communication that is Needed)
	Low	Med	High		
<b>The tasks – do they involve:</b> Holding loads away from trunk? Twisting? Stooping? Reaching upwards? Large vertical movement? Long carrying distances? Strenuous pushing or pulling? Unpredictable movement of loads? Repetitive handling? Insufficient rest or recovery? A work rate imposed by a process?					
<b>The loads are they:</b> Heavy? Bulky/unwieldy? Difficult to grasp? Unstable/unpredictable? Inherently harmful (E.g. sharp/hot)?					
<b>The working environment – are there:</b> Constraints on posture? Poor floors? Variation in levels? Hot/cold/humid conditions? Strong air movements? Poor lighting conditions?					
<b>Individual capability – does the job:</b> Require unusual capability? Hazard those with a health problem? Hazard those who are pregnant? Call for special information/training?					
<b>Other factors:</b> Is movement or posture hindered by clothing or personal protective equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO			

