



Manual Handling Policy

Introduction

Manual handling operations (MHOs) are one of the main causes of work-related ill-health. Wherever practicable, manual handling should be avoided. It is the policy of LSHTM to reduce the risks to health from carrying out MHOs to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The risk assessment process described in this document will evaluate individual MHOs, the effectiveness of existing risk control measures and, where necessary, require the identification and implementation of additional or alternative controls with the aim to prevent injury to the back and other parts of the body caused by MHOs.

Guidance on carrying out MHO risk assessments, a pro-forma to be used for such assessments and guidance for employees carrying out manual handling operation can be found below.

Application

This policy document applies to any form of MHO, i.e. the handling of loads by human effort, applied either directly to the load or indirectly, including:

- Transporting a load (lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or other form of moving by hand or bodily force)
- Supporting a load in a static position
- Intentional dropping or throwing of a load (e.g. into a bin)

Any hazards related to the load arising from chemical substances must also be considered.

Responsibilities

Deans of Faculty and Heads of Professional Services

The Deans of Faculty and Heads of Professional Services are responsible for:

- The implementation of this procedure within their area of responsibility
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place to provide appropriate information to members of staff, students, visitors etc
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient MHO risk assessments are carried out for all MHOs within their area(s) of responsibility and reviewed accordingly.
- Ensuring that a remedial action plan is developed, where the assessor determines that the current control measures to be inadequate. In assessing the risks to health, safety and welfare from MHOs the following hierarchy of control will be followed:

- Avoidance, so far as is reasonably practicable, of manual handling operations, e.g. by designing the task to avoid moving the load or by automating or mechanising the process
- Reduction in risk of injury from those MHOs that cannot be eliminated, e.g. by providing trolleys, splitting the load etc
- Ensuring that those responsible for carrying out risk assessments have been appropriately trained
- Ensuring all MHO risk assessments are reviewed, on a regular basis and following;
 - Significant work changes
 - Following an accident/incident
 - Member of staff returning to work after sickness, injury or changes to their health
 - Changes in legislation, regulations or HSE guidance

Note: No person will be considered as competent to undertake risk assessments unless they have been trained to do so

Note: The Deans of Faculty/Heads of Professional Services may delegate the above tasks to specific Managers, within their area of authority, as appropriate. Responsibility for health and safety forms part of managerial responsibility, through the management chain, even if not formally specified in the job description. The supervision of health and safety can be delegated, but the responsibility cannot.

Guidance for Carrying Out a Manual Handling Operation (MHO) Risk Assessment

Suitable and sufficient MHO risk assessments should be carried out for all tasks where there is a risk of injury from carrying out a MHO. Assessments should be carried out by the line manager, or their delegate, in consultation with those actively involved in carrying out the task. The results of assessments must be recorded. Generic assessments may be carried out where a task is common to several employees or to more than one site or type of work. The assessments must seek to reduce the level of risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. All assessments should consider the task, the load, the working environment and the individual.

Problems to look for when making an assessment:

1. The Task - does it involve:
 - Holding loads away from the body trunk?
 - Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards?
 - Large vertical movement?
 - Long carrying distances?
 - Strenuous pushing or pulling?
 - Unpredictable movement of loads?
 - Repetitive handling?
 - Insufficient rest or recovery time?
2. The Load - is it:
 - Bulky or unwieldy?
 - Difficult to grasp (e.g. hot/cold, slippery)?
 - Unstable or unpredictable (e.g. half-filled sack)?
 - Intrinsically harmful (e.g. hot, sharp)?
3. The Working Environment - are there:
 - Constraints on posture?
 - Poor floors?
 - Variations in levels (e.g. stairs or slopes to negotiate)?
 - Poor lighting conditions?
 - Restrictions on movement (e.g. personal protective equipment or blocked walkways)?
4. The Individual - does the job:
 - Potentially endanger those with a health problem?
 - Potentially endanger pregnant women?
 - Call for special information or training?

Ways of reducing the risk of injury:

1. The Task - can you:
 - Reduce the amount of twisting and turning?
 - Avoid lifting from floor level to above shoulder height?
 - Reduce carrying distances?
 - Avoid repetitive handling?
 - Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest whilst another is used?

2. The Load - can you make the load:
 - Lighter or less bulky?
 - Easier to grasp?
 - More stable?
 - Less damaging to hold?

3. The Working Environment - can you:
 - Remove obstructions to improve workplace layout and free movement?
 - Provide better flooring?
 - Avoid steps and steep ramps?
 - Prevent extremes of hot/cold?
 - Improve lighting?
 - Consider less restrictive personal protective equipment?

4. The Individual - can you:
 - Take better care those who have a physical weakness or are pregnant?
 - Give your employees more information e.g. about range of tasks they are likely to face
 - Provide training?

The Load - is it:					
Heavy?					
Bulky/unwieldy?					
Difficult to grasp?					
Unstable/unpredictable?					
Intrinsically harmful (eg hot)?					
The Working Environment - are there:					
Constraints on posture?					
Poor floors?					
Variations in levels?					
Hot/cold/humid conditions?					
Strong air movements?					
Poor lighting conditions?					
Individual Capacity - does the job:					
Require unusual capacity?					
Hazard those with a health problem?					
Hazard those who are pregnant?					
Call for special information or training?					
Other Factors:					
Is movement or posture hindered by clothing or personal protective equipment?					

Section C - Overall Assessment of Risk

Q1	What is your overall assessment of the risk of injury?	Insignificant / Low / Medium / High
	If ' Insignificant ' the assessment need go no further - file the form for future reference	
	If <u>NOT</u> ' Insignificant ' go to Section D - Remedial Action To Be Taken	

Section D - Remedial Action To Be Taken

Remedial steps to be taken, in order of priority:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

(continue on a blank sheet if necessary)

Appendix 3 - Manual Handling Guidance for Employees

This guidance does not remove the requirement for manual handling training where a risk assessment has shown such training to be necessary.

Many workplace tasks involve some level of manual handling operations and so this issue is relevant to most Faculties and Support Services. High-risk areas include those which involve routine handling as part of their daily tasks. Such risks can be magnified by lack of space, poor lighting, obstructions and poor floor conditions. All manual handling operations carry a degree of risk and the operative should take time to think about the risks associated with the particular activity and act accordingly.

If any individual suffers from a condition that might make manual handling operations difficult or risky then they should advise their line manager.

Training

Staff involved in manual handling tasks should receive thorough training before starting work, supervision as necessary and refresher training as required.

Topics covered should include:

- Potential health and safety hazards and how to recognise them
- Appropriate systems of work
- Maximum weights to be carried
- The importance of knowing one's own limitations and the need to ask for assistance if unsure
- Use of trolleys, steps and kick stools
- Use of mechanical aids
- Good handling techniques
- Shelving techniques
- Operations requiring two people
- Reporting existing injuries/health matters that could affect ability
- Reporting accidents and ill health that may be work-related, for example unusual or painful sensations in their back, shoulders, arms or fingers
- Reporting of any problems with equipment etc to their Line Manager.

Note: Training is important but on its own it can not overcome a lack of mechanical aids, unsuitable loads or bad working conditions.

Training is available through the Talent and Education Department. Please contact them on StaffDevelopment@lshtm.ac.uk if you require further information.

Good Handling Technique

1. Stop and Think:

- Plan the lift
- Make sure clothes and footwear are suitable to the task
- Assess the load, e.g. heavy/cumbersome/fluid/sharp edges etc.
- Where is the load to be placed?
- Use appropriate handling aids, e.g. trolleys, pulley systems
- Do you require help?
- Remove obstructions, e.g. discarded packaging
- For a long lift, e.g. floor to shoulder height, or moving a heavy load, consider resting the load mid-way, on a table, in order to change grip

2. Position the Feet
 - Feet apart - provides a balanced and stable base
 - Leading leg forward, pointing in direction you wish to go
3. Adopt a Good Posture
 - When lifting from a low level, bend the knees
 - Do not kneel or over flex the knees
 - Keep back straight, maintaining its natural curve (tucking the chin in helps)
 - Lean forward a little over the load if it helps to get a good grip
 - Keep shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips
 - Use leg muscles (thighs) to lift load
4. Get a Firm Grip
 - Try to keep arms within boundary formed by the legs
 - A hook grip is less tiring than keeping the fingers straight
 - If you need to vary your grip, do it as smoothly as possible
5. Keep Close to the Load
 - Keep the load as close to the trunk for as long as possible
 - Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the trunk
 - If a close approach to the load is not possible, slide it towards you before trying to lift
6. Don't Jerk
 - Lift smoothly
 - Raise the chin as the lift begins
 - Keep control of the load
7. Move the Feet
8. Put Down, then Adjust

Specific Tasks

The following practices should help in protecting staff when carrying out manual handling tasks:

1. Heavy Items

Where practicable, heavy items should be moved using trolleys or other aids. Staff should assess the task before attempting to move items and be instructed to refuse to move over-weight items.

2. Lifting / Carrying Objects

- If you are lifting objects from low down, always do so by bending your knees and not your back
- When carrying objects always keep your arms tucked in and hold the load as close to the body as possible
- Never carry a load that is too heavy for you and ensure the load does not obscure your vision
- Beware of objects on the floor
- Make sure you do not carry too many objects down the stairs and always leave a free hand for use on the handrail

3. Accessing Objects on Shelves

- Shelves should not be tightly packed with books / objects
- Heavy objects, where practicable, should be located at waist height
- Where practicable, shelves should be no higher than an adult of average size - if this is not possible then kick stools or steps must be provided. This will allow people to reach the shelves safely without having to lift objects above shoulder height
- Never over-extend your hand span
- Reach over with one hand to the back of the object, pull it out with that hand and support it underneath with the other
- To avoid stress on arm muscles, do not try to force an object into a tight space

4. Use of Kick Stools to reach higher shelves

- Always place both feet on the top of the kick stool
- If you are using the kick stool a lot then alternate the foot with which you step up
- Avoid twisting your body as you lift, try to keep your back straight and use two hands to lift and shelve.
- Extra care must be taken when using a kick stool. If a load is too heavy either break it down to make it lighter or seek assistance

5. Using Trolleys to Assist in Manual Handling Operations

Trolley routes should be designed, as far as practicable, to reduce twists and turns and to eliminate gradients. When using trolleys:

- Do not overload a trolley. If an overloaded trolley needs moving, remove some of the load first
- If you cannot move a trolley by yourself, ask for assistance in moving the load
- Make sure you have a good grip on the trolley handles. Push the trolley rather than pull it and lean in the direction you are pushing
- Stay close to the trolley and let your body weight and leg muscles do the work for you

Health Monitoring

Staff are encouraged to report persistent pains in the back, shoulders, arms or hands. The working practices of staff making such reports should be examined and appropriate suggestions for improvement made. The situation should be monitored and, if pain is still experienced, the person should be advised to seek medical advice, either from Occupational Health or his/her GP.

Further Reading

The following guidance will apply to most manual handling tasks:

- Manual Handling at work: a brief guide HSE INDG143
- Making the best use of lifting and handling aids HSE INDG398