



Manual Handling

Audience: Site Operatives

Presenter: GHSEA, Site Manager, Trade Supervisors



The Risk

Poor manual handling techniques present significant risks of developing musculoskeletal disorders which can be avoided by the safe planning and execution of manual handling tasks to prevent injury.



Responsibilities

Unless the manual handling task is for short duration, low risk and will not be repeated then it will need a written manual handling assessment. If this is not in place then speak to your Supervisor.



Considerations (TILE: Task, Individual Capability, Load & Environment)

- All manual handling activities must be suitably assessed.
- Use mechanical aids where possible (such as forklifts or pallet trucks).
- Know your capabilities and only tackle jobs you can handle, otherwise seek help.
- Check if there is a clear walkway with good lighting to the work area.
- Establish the weight of the load before starting to lift.
- Wear gloves to protect against cuts and safety boots to protect from falling loads.
- Make sure you have no loose clothing that could hinder you when lifting or carrying the load.
- Carry out a trial lift by rocking the load from side to side, then try lifting it a small way to get a feel for it.
- Consider weather conditions when handling sheet materials such as plasterboards as it can form a sail in strong winds and result in injury.



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Good manual handling techniques

- Stand reasonably close to the load, feet hip-width apart, one foot slightly forward pointing in the direction you're going.
- Flex your knees and slightly curve your back (avoid stooping or a deep squat when starting a lift).
- Get a secure grip on the load.
- A good lifting technique uses the strong muscles in your legs.
- Keep the load close to your body but don't carry a load that obscures your vision.
- Lift slowly and smoothly, avoiding jerky movements.
- Avoid twisting your body when lifting or carrying a load.
- When lifting to a height from the floor, do it in two stages if possible.
- When two or more people lift a load, one person must give directions to co-ordinate the lift.
- Make sure you check the route you are to take before lifting and carrying.
- Ensure you have the correct safety footwear and correct gloves for the task.
- Plan the lift and THINK before you lift.

