



# CSC Compliance Guidance

## Introduction to Manual Handling

As an employer, you must protect your workers from the risk of injury from any manual handling tasks that are deemed hazardous within the workplace. Manual handling is transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. A load can be an object or a person, for example turning mattresses or putting away deliveries.

Management must not expect any member of staff to lift, push or move a load which may result in injury to themselves or others. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations require employers to avoid, assess and reduce the risk of injury from manual handling. The law sets out how employers must deal with risks from manual handling:

- Avoid hazardous manual handling, as far as it is reasonably practicable.
- Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling.
- Reduce the risk of an injury from manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable.

To the balancing level 'reasonably practicable'. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risk in terms of money, time and trouble. The weight of a load is also important, though the law does not set specific weight limits.

## Avoiding Hazardous Manual Handling

You can avoid hazardous manual handling operations by:

- Redesigning the task to avoid moving the load.
- Mechanising the process with the use of mechanical aids.



## Assessing manual handling that cannot be avoided

Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided. You should consider the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability (detailed further in the guidance).

In addition, the following should be looked out for:

- Workers breathing heavily and sweating.
- Workers who complain of excessive fatigue.
- Reluctance to do a particular task.
- The availability of equipment to help with the lift.

Consult and involve your workforce in your risk assessment. They and their representatives know the risks in your workplace and may have practical solutions. Employees can often tell you which activities are unpopular, difficult or hard work.

## Reducing the risk of injury

Measures to control risk will vary depending on the task. Where possible, provide mechanical help, for example a sack trolley or hoist if reasonably practical. If manual lifting is the only option, then there are things you can do to reduce the risk, such as:

- Make the load smaller or lighter and easier to grasp.
- Modify the workplace to reduce carrying distances, twisting movements, or the need to lift things from floor level or above shoulder height.
- Change the work routine to avoid excessive work rates and tight deadlines.
- Improve the environment – more space, better flooring, extra lighting or changing the temperature can make manual handling easier and safer.
- Make sure the person doing the lifting has been trained to lift as safely as possible.

## Task specific manual handling assessments

Once hazardous manual handling tasks have been identified within the premises and from site risk assessments then task specific manual handling assessments will need to be completed for each task identified. A template is available within the health and safety policy. Failing to complete manual handling assessments for hazardous manual handling tasks is a **CRITICAL ISSUE**.

Once the assessment has been carried out, a detailed working procedure must be made within the recommendations considering the task, the load, the environment and the individual's ability to carry the task out.

## The load

- What is the weight? Is it too heavy?
- What is the shape? Does the shape make it difficult to move?
- What is the size of the object? Is it difficult or awkward to carry?
- Are there handles? Does the material make it dangerous to carry?
- Where is the centre of gravity? Does this influence the carrying or movement of the load?

## The task

- What is the frequency of the task and how can this influence health and safety?
- Does the task require any personal protection? Does the protection pose any other hazards?
- What equipment is used? Is a safe system of work required?
- Does twisting or stooping occur? Can it be eliminated?

## The environment

- Is there enough space/ height to move?
- Are there any changes in levels when carrying out the task?
- Can the objects temperature or the environmental temperature influence the task?

## Individual capability

The individual's ability to carry out a task must be considered.

- Is the employee strong enough?
- Has the individual been trained to carry out the task?
- Are there any medical reasons that could influence the task being carried out safely? E.g. back problems.
- Does the personal protective equipment fit?
- Training.

As with other risk assessments these need to be reviewed at least annually or when there is a change in mechanical aid, work practice, legislation or if there have been any accidents or incidents.

## Training

Training is important in raising awareness and reducing risk; on its own it will not ensure safe manual handling. Training needs to be relevant to the type of work being carried out and must cover:

- Manual handling risk factors and how injuries can happen.
- How to use mechanical aids.
- How to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling techniques.
- Systems of work relevant to the worker's tasks and environment.
- Practical work to allow the trainer to identify and correct anything the trainee is not doing safely.

The manual handling arrangement within the health and safety policy can also be used as a useful tool box talk and to obtain more detailed information.

A lack of training would be a **CRITICAL ISSUE**.