



Manual handling policy and guidance (in accordance with the manual handling operation regs 1992)

Background information

Incorrect manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. It causes work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which account for over a third of all workplace injuries.

Manual handling injuries can happen anywhere people are at work – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories, and while making deliveries. Heavy manual labour, awkward postures, manual materials handling, and previous or existing injury are all risk factors in developing MSDs.

Responsibilities - All staff will receive an overview of manual handling during new staff orientation.

Managers/heads of department are responsible for ensuring that any individual whose job involves lifting, putting down, carrying, pushing, moving or pulling is provided with adequate training via the Health and Safety manager.

Managers/heads of department are also responsible for ensuring that any task, carried out within their team, which involves any of the activities stated above, is adequately risk assessed. The Health and Safety manager is available to advise on the production risk assessments.

Under The Manual Handling Operations Regulations, at SOAS we have a duty to:

- Avoid the need for hazardous manual handling
- Assess the risks from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided
- Reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable

Staff and students have duties too, they should:

- follow systems of work in place for their safety
- use any equipment provided for their safety properly
- cooperate with their employer on health and safety matters
- inform their employer if they identify hazardous handling activities
- take care to make sure their activities do not put others at risk

What can be done to minimise the associated risks

- The most obvious way to minimise the risk is to avoid, if possible, manual handling activities altogether.
- Carrying out a risk assessment on the manual handling task will enable you think about and implement control measures, thus reducing the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.
- When putting together a risk assessment for manual handling it is important to think about the 4 main hazard factors, which are, the task, the individual, the load and the environment. At which point you can then start to think about the risk control measures that you can implement. Below is a guide to some of the potential hazards and some example of control measures that can be applied. Please note this is only a guide and each individual task should be assessed by its own circumstances.

Potential hazards relating to the TASK;

- Will the task involve awkward body movements
- Will you need to hold or manipulate loads at a distance from your body
- Will there be repeated lifting, lowering or carrying
- Is there a risk of sudden or unexpected movement from the load
- Are you likely to be handling such loads on a regular basis
- Will your task involve strenuous pushing or pulling
- Does your task allow you to have sufficient breaks and rest periods

Possible Task related control measures;

- Ensure that those undertaking the task have received manual handling training
- Suitable equipment is made available where required, for example trolleys or sack barrows
- Enlist the help of colleagues when needed
- Do not allocate manual handling tasks to staff with known health conditions which could make them more susceptible to injury
- Ensure that adequate breaks are taken
- Where possible ensure that handling tasks are distributed throughout the team, job share or rotation, for example

Potential hazards relating to the individual;

- Do you have any personal characteristics that could increase the risk of injury
- Is the height or required strength involved in the task beyond your physical capabilities
- Have you had sufficient training to carry out the task safely
- Do you have a current injury
- Do you have a history of MSD

Possible Individual related control measures;

- Individuals with known health conditions must not undertake a manual task that is likely to exacerbate their condition
- Individuals should assess the height involved in the task and the strength that may be required to successfully carry out the task prior to the commencement of it

Potential hazards relating to the load;

- Is the load, heavy, bulky or unwieldy
- Is the load unstable
- Is the load unpredictable
- Is the load difficult to grasp

Possible load related control measures;

- Where possible break loads down into smaller, more manageable weights and sizes
- If loads are not weight marked, individuals should enlist the help of colleagues to assess the weight
- Ensure that when necessary, appropriate PPE is provided, for example safety boots or gloves

Potential hazards relating to the environment;

- Will you be working in a confined space or somewhere it is difficult to adopt the right posture
- Is the floor surface, slippery, uneven or damaged
- Are there variations in floor level
- Are there extremes of temperature or humidity
- Are you likely to encounter strong winds or draughts
- Is clothing or PPE likely to affect your ability to handle the load safely

Possible environment related control measures;

- Ensure the route that is being taken is checked before any manual handling task is undertaken
- Variations in floors should be noted
- Any lighting faults should be reported to Estates
- Ensure that rests are taken, particularly in hot or humid conditions