

# Manual Handling of Loads Policy



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## 1. Introduction and Scope

The University of Sussex will comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended), which place a requirement on the employer and employee to “reduce the hazards to health associated with the manual handling of loads”.

Accordingly, the University will so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Avoid manual handling operations where a significant risk of injury could occur;
- Design and provide safe and ergonomically suitable workplace environments;
- Assess the risks associated with manual handling activities and eliminate or reduce these to a tolerable level;
- Introduce appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury;
- Provide equipment to enable manual handling activities to be undertaken safely;
- Provide suitable and sufficient supervision, training, (including periodic refresher training), and information to all staff involved in manual handling operations.

## 2. Purpose

Manual Handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury within the workplace. Monitoring of accident statistics has shown that a significant proportion of RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) reportable injuries are caused by manual handling activities.

This policy and its accompanying guidance, (Manual Handling of Loads Guidance HS G055), is therefore intended to help reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and promote good practice in all lifting, handling, carrying, pushing and pulling operations.

## 3. Definitions

**Manual Handling** – The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) define “manual handling operations” as – *the transporting or supporting of inanimate load, (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, and moving) by hand or bodily force.*

**Injury** – Injury to any part of the body caused by manual handling, injuries include; strained muscles, over-stretched or torn ligaments, trapped, compressed or impinged nerves and disc damage (e.g. prolapsed disc).

**Load** – A load is a discrete moveable object. This includes, for example, not only packages and boxes but also an inanimate person requiring placing in the recovery position, a lawn mower, pushing a car, and material supported on a shovel or fork. An implement, tool or machine, such as a chainsaw, or an electric drill, is not considered to be a load when in use for its intended purpose.

## 4. Responsibilities

### Manager’s responsibilities

Heads of Schools and Directors of Departments, (Managers), have a responsibility to ensure that all manual handling operations that are under their control that could result in injury are assessed and adequately controlled.

Therefore the Manager must:

- Appoint a suitably competent person to assist in undertaking the above.
- Identify all manual handling operations that may require a risk assessment.

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- Undertake risk assessments and implement any risk reduction measures identified as necessary.
- Identify all staff who are required to undertake manual handling operations and provide them with appropriate training and information necessary to carry out the manual handling task allotted to them, (training and information should be updated as necessary).
- Ensure staff are made aware of this policy and associated guidance and that they understand and are able to comply with it.
- Act promptly to reduce any manual handling hazards identified by employees.
- Record the results of the risk assessment and retain for five years.
- Review assessments on an annual basis or when the work significantly changes.

Liaise with the Health & Safety Team by:

- Consulting with the Health & Safety Team where the residual risk is assessed as high.
- Ensuring all manual handling incidents and injuries are reported to the Health & Safety Team via Sussex Direct.

Liaise with the Occupational Health Service (OHS) provider by:

- Informing the OHS provider on the pre-employment health questionnaire of any manual handling hazards pertinent to the job being offered.
- Informing the OHS provider if they become aware of any health problems resulting from or could affect an employee's ability to carry out manual handling activities.
- Implementing any health advice given by the OHS provider.

**Employee responsibilities**

Employees must:

- Adhere to the identified safe working practices.
- Make full and proper use of any safety equipment or manual handling aids provided.
- Report any defects in systems, practices or equipment.
- Co-operate with the University in undertaking the assessments.
- Attend training provided and put it into practice in the workplace.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their activities.
- Inform the manager when they believe that there is a risk of injury to health from a manual handling activity.
- Inform the manager when they suspect the risk assessment is no longer valid.
- Inform the manager of any health problem or condition that might affect their ability to handle loads safely.
- Comply with any health advice given by the OHS provider.

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## Health & Safety Team responsibilities

The Health & Safety Team is responsible for:

- The monitoring, and where necessary, the investigation of reported manual handling incidents.
- Developing and co-ordinating training in manual handling.
- Providing advice to Schools and Departments on manual handling issues.
- Promoting awareness of safe manual handling practices.

## Occupational Health Service (OHS) provider responsibilities

The OHS provider is responsible for:

- Assessing the physical capacity of employees to determine fitness to undertake manual handling activities (as defined in Job Descriptions).
- Advising managers and staff on associated problems and health issues.
- Providing advice to Schools and Departments on manual handling issues.
- Promoting awareness of safe manual handling practices.

## 5. Details of procedure/operational details

Avoid, eliminate, automate or mechanise manual handling

The first control measure to consider is whether the manual handling activity can be avoided. This may be achieved by elimination, automation or mechanisation of the task.

### Manual Handling Risk Assessment

The Regulations require that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out when hazardous manual handling is unavoidable.

The aim of the manual handling risk assessment is to make a well-informed decision about the measures necessary to prevent, or adequately control high risk manual handling operations and reduce the risk of injury. It can form part of a more general risk assessment for a specific work task and its complexity should reflect the magnitude of the manual handling risk being assessed.

The assessment should follow an ergonomic approach and consider the characteristics of the **Load** **Individual Capabilities**; the **Task** and the work **Environment**, (LITE), associated with the activity (see Appendix 1 for LITE hazard information).

Manual handling assessments should be carried out by a competent person, recorded and reviewed regularly.

Manual handling risk assessment outcomes should be communicated to the employees undertaking the work. Managers in control of the work must ensure the control measures are implemented and used by their employees. Managers, in conjunction with other competent persons, will monitor the effectiveness of the control measures.

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To help risk assessors identify how best to reduce risk, a list of suggested risk reduction measures and controls are given as an aide memoir (see Appendix 2) and further information and advice can be found in the University's Manual Handling of Loads Guidance document (HS G055).

The list is not meant to be exhaustive and can be expanded upon.

### **Manual handling aids**

Mechanical assistance from the use of handling aids (e.g. sack barrows and trolleys) can help reduce the risk of injury. If the manual handling assessment identifies that a lifting aid is needed, it should be suitable and sufficient for the task and fulfil Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) requirements.

Users of aids must be trained, and regular checks of the equipment carried out and recorded.

Reporting of high-risk activities and injuries Employees must report high risk manual handling activities to their line manager. If the manual handling activity is perceived to be extremely high risk the employee(s) designated to undertake that activity must NOT proceed and should immediately inform their line manager, or someone with similar authority, to facilitate remedial action.

Employees shall report manual handling accidents and incidents to their manager and arrange for their Health and Safety Coordinator to complete a University Incident report as soon as possible.

## **6. Training**

The Health & Safety Team provide a training course on managing the risks of manual handling operations:

### For all Staff involved in manual handling activities – Practical manual handling training

The course focuses on manual handling hazards, the risks from manual handling, safe lifting techniques and control measures. It includes an element of practical lifting exercises.

This course gives staff the opportunity to discuss any lifting experiences or concerns in a group environment. The course covers the key points on assessing hazards and risk control taught in the practical manual handling training and advises on safe lifting/carrying techniques with an opportunity for participants to try them out.

## **7. Monitoring & review**

The assessment should be kept up to date. It should be reviewed if new information comes to light or if there has been a change in the manual handling operations. The assessment should also be reviewed if a reportable injury occurs or when individual employees suffer an illness, injury or the onset of disability which may make them more vulnerable to risk.

The Health & Safety Team will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by means of inspection, audit the study of reported incidents and consultation with the OHS provider regarding the number of work-related occupational health referrals.

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## 8. References/Related Documents

UofS Manual Handling of Loads Guidance (HS G055)

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/Manual Handling](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/Manual%20Handling)

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (guidance on the Regulations)

[Manual Handling - Manual Handling Regulations 1992 - Guidance on Regulations](#)

Manual Handling at Work – A brief guide

[Manual Handling – a brief guide \(INDG143\)](#)

HSE guidance on manual handling

[Manual handling at work - Musculoskeletal disorders - HSE](#)

HSE Manual handling assessment charts

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf>

HSE simple guide to Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf>

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## Appendix 1: LITE (hazard information)

<p><b>LOAD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centre of gravity</li> <li>Weight</li> <li>Bulky</li> <li>Size</li> <li>Slippery to hold</li> <li>Difficult to grasp</li> <li>Fragile contents</li> <li>Shifting contents</li> <li>Badly stacked</li> <li>Hot temperature</li> <li>Sharp edges</li> <li>Right way up</li> <li>Too big to see over</li> </ul>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inexperience</li> <li>Competence</li> <li>Training</li> <li>Age</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Strength</li> <li>Ability to communicate</li> <li>Attitude</li> <li>Disability</li> <li>Pregnancy</li> <li>Mental ability</li> </ul>
<p><b>TASK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strenuous pulling/pushing</li> <li>Bending</li> <li>Overreaching</li> <li>Twisting movements</li> <li>Repetition handling</li> <li>Carrying long distance</li> <li>Static muscle work</li> <li>Team handling</li> <li>Bonus schemes</li> <li>Handling above head height</li> <li>Handling away from the body</li> <li>Insufficient rest time</li> </ul>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confined space</li> <li>Obstacles</li> <li>Hot/cold</li> <li>Humidity</li> <li>Lighting</li> <li>Ventilation</li> <li>Weather (e.g. wind, ice)</li> <li>Slip trip hazards</li> <li>Holes/slopes</li> <li>Uneven floors</li> <li>Stairs</li> <li>Ill-fitting PPE</li> <li>Proximity of other workers</li> <li>Other hazards (e.g. vehicles)</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 2: Aide memoir of risk reduction measures and controls

Problem areas (LITE plus other factors)	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
Load(s)	<p><b>Can you make the load:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lighter or less bulky?</li> <li>• easier to grasp?</li> <li>• more stable?</li> <li>• less damaging to hold?</li> </ul> <p>The above may be achieved by asking the supplier of externally sourced goods to help, e.g. provide handles or smaller packages.</p>
Individual capability	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness?</li> <li>• take extra care of pregnant workers?</li> <li>• give your employees more information, e.g. about the range of tasks they are likely to face?</li> <li>• provide more training?</li> </ul>
Task(s)	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use a lifting aid?</li> <li>• improve workplace layout to improve efficiency?</li> <li>• reduce the amount of twisting and stooping?</li> <li>• avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads?</li> <li>• reduce carrying distances?</li> <li>• avoid repetitive handling?</li> <li>• vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used?</li> <li>• push rather than pull?</li> </ul>
Environment	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove obstructions to free movement?</li> <li>• provide floors and traffic routes which are in good condition?</li> <li>• avoid steps and steep ramps?</li> <li>• prevent extremes of hot or cold?</li> <li>• improve lighting?</li> <li>• provide adequate ventilation?</li> <li>• provide adequate space for the movement of people?</li> <li>• prevent falling objects or falls from height?</li> </ul>
Other factors (e.g. handling aids and equipment, work organisation)	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide equipment that is more suitable for the task?</li> <li>• carry out planned preventative maintenance to prevent problems?</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure equipment designed to be “wheeled” can move easily?</li> <li>• provide better handles and grips?</li> <li>• make brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?</li> <li>• provide work clothing and/or PPE which is less restrictive?</li> <li>• ensure work clothing and/or PPE is suitable for the work?</li> <li>• vary tasks to reduce the monotony?</li> <li>• make better use of workers skills?</li> <li>• make workloads and deadlines more achievable?</li> <li>• encourage good communication and teamwork?</li> <li>• involve workers in decisions?</li> <li>• provide better training and information?</li> </ul>
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