

Risk Assessment Guidance



The assessor can assign values for the hazard severity (a) and likelihood of occurrence (b) (taking into account the frequency and duration of exposure) on a scale of 1 to 5, then multiply them together to give the rating band:

Hazard Severity (a)		Likelihood of Occurrence (b)	
1 – Trivial	(eg discomfort, slight bruising, self-help recovery)	1 – Remote	(almost never)
2 – Minor	(eg small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need)	2 – Unlikely	(occurs rarely)
3 – Moderate	(eg strain, sprain, incapacitation > 3 days)	3 – Possible	(could occur, but uncommon)
4 – Serious	(eg fracture, hospitalisation >24 hrs, incapacitation >4 weeks)	4 – Likely	(recurrent but not frequent)
5 – Fatal	(single or multiple)	5 – Very likely	(occurs frequently)

The risk rating (high, medium or low) indicates the level of response required to be taken when designing the action plan.

	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Fatal
Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

Rating Bands (a x b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 - 12)	HIGH RISK (15 - 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	-STOP THE ACTIVITY- Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to a low or medium level

Generic Risk Assessment for Office Manual Handling Operations

Assessor(s): A. Chapman (Health and Safety Advisor)	Date: March 2017
Definition of manual handling operations: 'Any transporting or supporting of a load by hand or by bodily force'. This includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving items, and the use of mechanical aids, e.g. trolleys, sack barrows, wheeled cases.	
Some general points: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Manual handling should be avoided wherever possible (e.g. by using plumbed in drinking water instead of a bottled water cooler).2. Assistive equipment should be used, e.g. trolley, wheeled case, etc. where practical. Equipment should be chosen carefully to ensure it is suitable for the load, the individual, the task, and the environment it is being used in.3. Storage of items should take into account the need to move them.4. The provision of specific information, instruction, training, and supervision should be included as control measures where appropriate.5. When assessing the risk of any particular activity, factors in the assessment should not be taken individually, as a combination of factors may increase the level of risk. For example the need to bend or stoop while pulling a heavy item out of an awkward low space is likely to incur a greater risk than any one factor taken alone (stooping, pulling, moving a heavy item). The activity needs to be assessed as a whole, including taking into account the person who is carrying out the activity.6. Line managers should check for updates / reviews of this assessment annually and should ensure that it remains appropriate for their needs.7. Line managers should report all manual handling related incidents, and seek advice from UHSE after the occurrence of any injury that could have been caused by manual handling or is likely to be made worse by continuing the task.	
Please also refer to the HSE publication Manual Handling at Work: a Brief Guide This booklet includes a useful guideline chart showing guideline maximum weights for lifting in different positions, and a series of diagrams demonstrating a safe lifting technique.	

#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required	Severity (a)	Likelihood (b)	Risk (a x b)
	Uncontrolled manual handling in an office work setting	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects	Initial risk with no control measures. See below for recommended control measures for typical office-based manual handling operations	3	4	12
				4	3	12

The table below lists the factors that need to be taken into consideration for manual handling operations.

It is not possible to fill this out in a generic way, as each situation will be different. The greater the number of 'Yes' answers, the higher the risk and therefore the more attention needs to be paid to details of the control measures to be implemented.

The Load – Is it:	Yes / No	The Individuals – Does the job:	Yes / No	The Task - Does it involve:	Yes / No	The Environment – Are there:	Yes / No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> heavy? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> require unusual strength, height etc? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holding or manipulating loads at distance from trunk? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> space constraints preventing ergonomic posture? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bulky or unwieldy? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a hazard to those who might reasonably be considered to be pregnant or to have a health problem or other vulnerability? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> twisting the trunk? Stooping? Reaching upwards? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uneven, slippery or unstable floors? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to grasp? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require special information or training for its safe performance? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> excessive movement of loads, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive lifting or lowering distances? Excessive carrying distances? Excessive pushing or pulling of loads? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variations in level of floors or work surfaces? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unstable, or with contents likely to shift? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is movement or posture hindered by personal protective equipment or by clothing? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent or prolonged physical effort? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremes of temperature or humidity? 	

The Load – Is it:	Yes / No	The Individuals – Does the job:	Yes / No	The Task - Does it involve:	Yes / No	The Environment – Are there:	Yes / No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharp, hot or otherwise potentially damaging? (such as a hazardous chemical product) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient rest or recovery periods? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions causing ventilation problems or gusts of wind? 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rate of work imposed by a process? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor lighting conditions? 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of vibrating equipment? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doors along the route? 	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of lifting equipment? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other people / other activities in the area? 	
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazards associated with the storage of items? 	

HAZARDS RELATED TO THE TASK (WHAT PEOPLE ARE DOING)			
Examples of tasks: Rearranging office / meeting room furniture; Delivering printer paper / brochures; Carrying things to meetings (papers; laptop; etc.); Changing the water bottle on water coolers 'Spring cleaning' (weeding out old paperwork / unused equipment); Packing up / unpacking for office move.		Actions that may be involved: Bending to floor; bending into low cupboards; Lifting/carrying/putting down heavy items; Pushing / pulling / lifting furniture; Reaching across desk; Reaching up to high shelves – putting up or lifting down heavy / awkward items.	
#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required
1	Lifting / putting down / stooping	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good posture and good lifting technique
2	Reaching up		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not store items on high shelves where possible Store only light weights or small items on high shelves Store only items that are required infrequently if high shelves must be used Minimise moving objects above head height Do not store heavy files etc. on high shelves

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically cull stored paperwork so that there is no unnecessary storage - thus freeing up space on lower shelves
3	Work at height (i.e. when your feet aren't on the floor)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate step ladder / kick stool available if necessary
4	Holding or manipulating load at a distance from the trunk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce weight of load Bring load as close to trunk as possible
5	Twisting the trunk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid by moving the feet and whole body Reduce weight of load if twisting is unavoidable
6	Distance of travel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use wheeled equipment where possible Reduce weight of individual loads if carried Have 'set-down' points to split up long travel distances
7	Pushing / pulling		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push rather than pull where possible Ensure force required to start / stop and maintain load in motion is within individual's capability
8	Frequent / repetitive or prolonged physical effort		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vary the work to allow one set of muscles to rest while another is used Reduce weight of loads

HAZARDS RELATED TO THE LOAD (THE ITEMS BEING MOVED)

Typical items:

Office furniture: desk; stand-alone shelving; cupboards (various heights); filing cabinets; computer chairs; visitor chairs;

Office equipment: monitors, computer tower; laptop computer; water bottles;

Files and stationery: Box files; magazine boxes; ring binders; lever arch binders; books; boxes of printer paper/brochures; contents of filing cabinets.

#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required
9	Weight	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store heavy items at an appropriate height. Use a trolley or sack truck to move heavy items where appropriate Ensure that the weight / size of object to be moved is within the person's capability Ensure that staff are made aware of ways to move heavy objects if lifted by hand Ensure that staff are aware/trained on how to split heavy loads and make them easier to handle

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that office moves are organised with Porters and that their moving boxes are not over-filled • Ensure that desktop computers are moved by arrangement with Computing Services • Ensure that office furniture is moved by Porters.
10	Balance / weight distribution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test loads before lifting • Aim to balance load as evenly as possible across the body for single lifts or between people for team lifts e.g. when moving a table or desk
11	Unstable / contents likely to shift (e.g. containers of water; part-filled boxes)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever practical, water dispensers should be plumbed in rather than using bottled water. Where this is not practical: • Water cooler bottles to be changed by named person / people who have received suitable training on an appropriate method for manipulating the full bottles • Ensure packing container is suitable for the contents • Re-pack contents to improve stability
12	Bulky or unwieldy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break load down into more manageable sizes where possible • Lift between two people in a co-ordinated fashion
13	Difficult to grasp		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing carry handles or other carrying tools
14	Sharp / hot / cold / otherwise potentially damaging		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider appropriate personal protective equipment if hazard cannot be removed

HAZARDS RELATED TO THE INDIVIDUAL

#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required
15	Lower strength / fitness / other physical attributes	Sedentary workers may have lower levels of general fitness than workers in more physically demanding roles and could be more susceptible to injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the task is within the individual's physical capability

16	Vulnerability	Vulnerable individual e.g. expectant or new mother; young person; previous musculoskeletal injury; other relevant health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual assessments to take into account the specific vulnerability
17	Inadequate training / knowledge / experience needed to perform the task safely	This is a leading cause of both acute and chronic injury due to manual handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office workers should ensure they are aware of and use suitable handling techniques for the manual handling operations they are likely to undertake

HAZARDS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT (THE LOCATION/S WHERE THE ACTIVITY IS TAKING PLACE)

Office may have restricted space for manoeuvring;
 Items may need to be transported across campus or from one site to another;
 Corridors may provide restricted space for movement of larger articles;
 Items may need to be transported to different floors (use of lift / stairs).

#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required
18	Space constraints preventing good posture	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove obstructions where possible before carrying out the task
19	Uneven, slippery, or unstable floors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange to improve the floor surface where possible
20	Variation in level of floor or work surface		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid steps and steep ramps where possible e.g. by using a suitable lift or by planning an alternative route
21	Doors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider obtaining assistance with opening non-automatic doors
22	Other people / other activities in the area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that others are aware of what you are doing and are able to keep clear.

#	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures required	Severity (a)	Likelihood (b)	Risk (a x b)
	Manual handling in an office work setting using suitable and sufficient control measures	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects	Recommended minimum control measures are given below for a range of office tasks	3	2	6
				4	1	4

Ready reference for typical office-based tasks

FOR ALL TASKS:

- Ensure that that workers know how to move heavy or awkward objects
- Ensure the task is within the individual's physical capability
- Make individual assessments that take into account the specific vulnerability where required.

TASK	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES
Delivering / moving printer paper / brochures / other boxed items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store at an appropriate height • Use a trolley or sack truck to move boxes where possible • Test loads before lifting • Break load down into more manageable sizes where possible • Avoid steps and steep ramps where possible e.g. by using a suitable lift or by planning an alternative route • Consider obtaining assistance with opening non-automatic doors • Ensure that others are aware of what you are doing and are able to keep clear
Carrying things to meetings (papers; laptop; etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, use a suitable wheeled bag to avoid carrying items or a back-pack style of carrying bag to avoid uneven weight on shoulders • Aim to balance load as evenly as possible across the body if items are carried in the arms. • Office workers should ensure they are aware of and use suitable handling techniques for the manual handling operations they are likely to undertake
'Spring cleaning' (weeding out old paperwork / unused equipment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store heavy items at an appropriate height • Do not over-fill disposal bags
Rearranging office furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that desktop computers are moved by arrangement with Computing Services • Ensure that heavy or awkward office furniture is moved by Porters. • Where necessary, lift furniture between two people in a co-ordinated fashion
Rearranging meeting room furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to balance load as evenly as possible across the body for single lifts or between people for team lifts e.g. when moving a table or desk • Lift between two people in a co-ordinated fashion • Ensure that others are aware of what you are doing and are able to keep clear.
Manual handling tasks associated with Water coolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever practical, water dispensers should be plumbed in rather than using bottled water. Where this is not practical: • Consider provision of smaller water bottles • Use of smaller volume bottles for the machines • Water cooler bottles to be changed by named person / people who have received suitable training on an appropriate method for manipulating the full bottles.
Packing up / unpacking for office move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that office moves are organised with Porters and that office furniture is moved by Porters. • Ensure that desktop computers are moved by arrangement with Computing Services • Test heavy or large loads before lifting

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to balance load as evenly as possible across the body for single lifts or between people for team lifts e.g. when moving a table or desk• Ensure packing containers are suitable for the contents• Do not over-fill packing containers, especially if contents are heavy items.• Individuals should ensure they take adequate breaks from packing / unpacking to avoid muscle fatigue / repetitive strain. |
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