Manual Handling Risk Rating Guidance

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| Regulation 4(1) of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR) sets out a hierarchy of measures to reduce the risks of manual handling.   * avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable; * assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; * reduce the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable. |

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| Injury rating | | Risk Factor Rating Bands | | | |
|  | | Add a colour to each risk factor where there is a ‘YES’ response in the table below | | | |
| Trivial | e.g., discomfort, slight bruising, self-help recovery | VERY LOW RISK | **LOW RISK** | **MEDIUM RISK** | **HIGH RISK** |
| Minor | e.g., small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need |  |  |  |  |
| **Moderate** | e.g., strain, sprain, incapacitation > 3 days | Unlikely to contribute to injury | Could contribute to trivial or minor injury | Could contribute to moderate injury | Likely or very likely to contribute to moderate injury OR Could contribute to serious injury or fatality |
| **Serious** | e.g., fracture, hospitalisation >24 hrs, incapacitation >4 weeks |
| **Fatal** | single or multiple fatalities |
| **All identified risk factors (where the answer is ‘YES’) must be considered in the risk assessment.** | | **Blue-rated factors require no additional controls but should continue to be monitored for any change in circumstance.** | Green-rated factors require additional controls where reasonably practicable and should be monitored for effectiveness. | Amber-rated factors require additional control measures to be put in place as soon as practicable and should be monitored for effectiveness. | All red-rated factors must be addressed before further work can be permitted. |

Generic Risk Assessment for Office Manual Handling Operations

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| Assessor(s):  A. Chapman (Health and Safety Advisor) | Date:  March 2017 reviewed March 2020 |
| 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:   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](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf) 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 | Risk factor Rating |
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|  | Uncontrolled manual handling in an office work setting | Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects | Initial risk factor rating without control measures.  See below for recommended control measures for typical office-based manual handling operations | MEDIUM |

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| 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 | * Good posture and good lifting technique |
| 2 | Reaching up |  | * 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 * 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) |  | * Use appropriate step ladder / kick stool available if necessary |
| 4 | Holding or manipulating load at a distance from the trunk |  | * Reduce weight of load * Bring load as close to trunk as possible |
| 5 | Twisting the trunk |  | * Avoid by moving the feet and whole body * Reduce weight of load if twisting is unavoidable |
| 6 | Distance of travel |  | * 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 |  | * 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 |  | * Vary the work to allow one set of muscles to rest while another is used * Reduce weight of loads |

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| 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 | * 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 * 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 |  | * 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) |  | * 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 |  | * Break load down into more manageable sizes where possible * Lift between two people in a co-ordinated fashion |
| 13 | Difficult to grasp |  | * Consider providing carry handles or other carrying tools |
| 14 | Sharp / hot / cold / otherwise potentially damaging |  | * Consider appropriate personal protective equipment if hazard cannot be removed |

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| 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. | * 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 | * 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 | * Office workers should ensure they are aware of and use suitable handling techniques for the manual handling operations they are likely to undertake |

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| 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 | * Remove obstructions where possible before carrying out the task |
| 19 | Uneven, slippery, or unstable floors |  | * Arrange to improve the floor surface where possible |
| 20 | Variation in level of floor or work surface |  | * Avoid steps and steep ramps where possible e.g. by using a suitable lift or by planning an alternative route |
| 21 | Doors |  | * Consider obtaining assistance with opening non-automatic doors |
| 22 | Other people / other activities in the area |  | * 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 | Risk factor Rating |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Manual handling in an office work setting using suitable and sufficient control measures | Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects | Risk factor rating including recommended control measures. | LOW |

**Ready reference for suitable control measures 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.

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| **TASK** | **RECOMMENDED MINIMUM CONTROL MEASURES** |
| Delivering / moving printer paper / brochures / other boxed items | * 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.) | * 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) | * Store heavy items at an appropriate height * Do not over-fill disposal bags |
| Rearranging office furniture | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 * 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. |