

MANUAL HANDLING OF LOADS

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK

The law does not identify a maximum weight limit. It places duties on employers to manage or control risk; measures to take to meet this duty will vary depending on the circumstances of the task. Things to be considered will include the individual carrying out the handling operation, e.g. strength, fitness, underlying medical conditions, the weight to be lifted and distance to be carried, the nature of the load or the postures to be adopted or the availability of equipment to facilitate the lift.

There is no universally safe maximum weight for any load, however, there are varying degrees of risk. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations guidance gives basic guideline figures for lifting and lowering which indicate when a more detailed risk assessment should be carried out.

Every procedure involving manual handling must be assessed – remember there is no such thing as a safe manual handling procedure – if in doubt leave it and get help. Four out of five people will suffer from back problems during their working life – don't be a statistic.

It is the responsibility of all employees to –

- ❖ Make full and proper use of handling aids and personal protective equipment provided.
- ❖ Inform your employer of any physical condition suffered that might affect your ability to undertake manual handling operations safely including any near misses
- ❖ Exercise care and diligence at all times giving consideration to others who may be affected by your activities. Always warm up first, 80% of back injuries are reportedly due to lack of exercise
- ❖ Co-operate with your employer to help compliance with Health & Safety duties.

A load is - Any object or person (or animal); **A manual handling operation is** - Any transportation or supporting of a load including the lifting, lowering, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, by hand or by bodily force.

Any loads must be carried in small amounts and great care should be taken when using the stairs. Under no circumstances should loads be carried where you cannot see properly. Take a number of journeys if necessary.

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Before tackling a load the following considerations must be made.

- 1) Does the load need to be moved?
- 2) Can you move the work area to the load?
- 3) How heavy is the load?
- 4) Will you need help?
- 5) What is the best way of moving the load?
- 6) Can the load be moved mechanically?
- 7) Should you delay (for example boiling water cannot be safely moved) allow to cool and divide into smaller loads.

HAZARDS INVOLVED

- ❖ Dropping the load
- ❖ Muscle spasms caused by tension and stress
- ❖ Strains and sprains from working unused muscles too hard or lifting incorrectly.
- ❖ Tears or damage to the discs between the vertebrae may cause a slipped disc
- ❖ Hernias (ruptures in the stomach wall) caused by strains from lifting

SAFETY MEASURES TAKEN

- ❖ Choose the flattest, straightest, and clearest route.
- ❖ Move any objects you might trip over.
- ❖ Look for places where you can stop and rest.
- ❖ Make sure the unloading area is clear
- ❖ Check the object/load you are carrying and make sure that -
The weight is stable and distributed evenly/Particularly Hot Food & Liquids
- ❖ There is nothing sharp or abrasive sticking out.



- ❖ The load is light enough to be carried alone.
- ❖ Where possible a lifting aid such as stable or suitable trolley is used When moving stock such as hot food it is carried in small amounts and a cloth is used.
- ❖ Use a trolley or get help for large loads such as beer stock or linen

TWO PERSON LIFTING

- ❖ Both people should be about the same size
- ❖ One person should be in charge of saying when to move and where
- ❖ Raise and lift at the same time
- ❖ Keep the load at the same level while carrying it
- ❖ Move smoothly together
- ❖ Unload at the same time
- ❖ If one person can safely lift 40kg the ratio for two people isn't doubled it is a lower ratio of around 28kg depending on the risk assessment.

**IF THE LOAD IS HEAVY/AWKWARD OR DIFFICULT TO CARRY EMPLOYEES WILL
GET HELP AND INFORM THEIR SUPERVISOR**

Safe Systems of work must be obeyed at all times

MANUAL HANDLING SAFETY MEASURES

Do not carry anything that is too heavy; unwieldy; difficult to grasp; unstable; sharp or hot etc. If possible lift in pairs or use mechanical aids, trolleys etc.

When lifting in pairs make sure one of you is in charge and you are both roughly the same height. If necessary the stronger person should take the heavier end.

Always inform your Supervisor of any difficulties or potential injuries.

Ensure that floors are stable and slip proof; comfortable temperature; well lit; adequate space; clear visible passage and constant floor level.

Change tasks regularly to utilise other muscles and ensure adequate rest periods are taken.

All linen must be carried in small loads and great care should be taken when using the stairs. Under no circumstances should loads be carried where you cannot see properly. Take a number of journeys if necessary.

FURTHER SAFETY MEASURE

- 1. Warm up before lifting - Bend or stretch to get ready (many injuries from lifting happened when people fail to warm up)*
- 2. Decide how you will lift and carry before you pick anything up*
- 3. Keep your back straight, use your body weight to lift using your leg muscles*
- 4. Arms should be kept close to the body minimising the work required by the upper back and shoulders. Use the correct muscles for the job*
- 5. Get a proper grip with the palms and base of fingers not finger tips*
- 6. Look straight ahead with your chin tucked in. This will help you keep your back straight and reduce stress on the spine.*
- 7. Remember to bend your knees; your legs have the strongest muscles in your body.*
- 8. Do not twist your body. Twisting while carrying a load is a major cause of injury.*
- 9. Use your body weight to counterbalance the load for stability and weight distribution when moving.*
- 10. Keep your feet and hips approximately shoulder width apart. One foot in front of other - Front one pointing in general direction of intended travel if possible.*
- 11. To unload face the spot you have chosen and lower (bending your knees) to the chosen area, keep your fingers away from the bottom and place the load on the edge then slide back.*
- 12. Break large loads into several smaller ones*
- 13. Wear correct shoes and the provided personal protective equipment*
- 14. Avoid loose clothing that could get caught or trapped*
- 15. Load and unload at waist height*

If The Worst Happens:

- 1. Don't Move*
- 2. Rest until medical help arrives so further problems do not arise*
- 3. Get medical attention immediately and make sure the accident is entered into the Accident Book*

DON'T OVERDO IT. THE RISK OF INJURY IS TOO GREAT

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS AND GET HELP WHENEVER IT IS NEEDED

DO NOT LIFT IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR HAVE A MEDICAL CONDITION

NEVER CARRY A LOAD IF IT IS A RISK TO HEALTH

ONLY YOU KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CAN LIFT NO ONE CAN TELL YOU!



If an employee hasn't been given the correct instruction or feel they are not capable of carrying out they should refuse. No organisation should expect an employee to carry out a task they are not trained for.