

Manual Handling

Standard



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1 Introduction

This standard describes the minimum requirements for manual handling, of goods to ensure the health and safety of individuals who may carry out such work directly or indirectly are not jeopardized.

The requirements shall be applied to all appropriate work activities involving manual handling of goods (e.g. lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, holding). Handling of chemical is not included in this standard, but described in the standard for [Chemical handling](#)

Where local legislation exceeds requirements in this standard, local legislative requirement shall apply.

2 Requirements

The following requirements shall be followed when performing manual handling tasks:

- manual handling activities shall not put the employees or others at unacceptable risk,
- employees who are pregnant or with pre-existing musculoskeletal disorders shall not perform manual handling activities,
- mechanical handling equipment shall be used whenever possible by an individual who is authorized and trained to use it,
- if manual handling tasks cannot be eliminated, assess the risk of injury from any manual handling that cannot be avoided and reduce the risk of injury from manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable,
- review the effectiveness of the control measures or solution,
- care should also be taken to ensure that relevant activities do not put others at risk,
- one person should never attempt to lift heavy loads alone,
- when two or more persons lift a load, one of the team must be nominated to give instruction to ensure that each person lifts an equal share and the team work together,
- the clothing, footwear etc. worn by employees must not impede safe manual handling, for example avoid slippery gloves, light footwear and loose clothing that may snag during lifting. Ensure clothing does not limit movement by being too tight., and
- anyone required to handle loads manually shall receive appropriate manual handling training



3 Personal Protective Equipment

The appropriate protective equipment shall be worn for the job:

- appropriate quality gloves (e.g. considering dexterity and cut resistance) where there is a risk of cutting the hands,
- protective footwear, and
- appropriate clothing which does not impede safe manual handling (e.g. loose clothing shall be avoided as it may snag during lifting).

4 Medical fitness and response

An employee's health condition shall where legally permitted be a part of the local risk assessment.

5 Risk assessment and planning

When a manual handling activity cannot be eliminated it must be assessed for risks. Lifting is the way of manual handling that is most likely to give rise to injuries and will be used in this instruction as an example of how what to take into consideration in the risk assessment.

5.1 Lifting

When manual handling includes lifting, risk assessment shall include four factors: task, load, work environment and individual capacities.

The task, which focuses on the movements required of the employees as they handle the load, can be assessed from below perspectives:

- that height that the load is picked up, carried, or put down,
- the repetition of the task,
- the work-rate,
- the carrying distance,
- allowed rest breaks, and
- awkward posture, like stooping (keeping legs straight and bending back), twisting (turning the shoulders while the feet stay still), lifting the load through a vertical distance, reaching above shoulder height, holding the load away from their trunk, and so on.

The load, which focus on the load that is being handled, can be assessed from below perspectives:

- weight,
- size,
- shape and edge,



- stability,
- center of gravity,
- availability of handle(s),
- temperature, and
- other hazards.

The work environment, which focus on where the handling takes place, can be assessed from below perspectives:

- restrictions on the workspace available,
- floor surface and changes in floor level,
- light level, and
- temperature and humidity.

Individual capabilities, which focus on the employee carrying out the handling activity, can be assessed from below perspectives:

- unusual ability required of the employees (for example unusual strength, stamina, size, or technique), and
- significant risk to vulnerable individuals, such as pregnant women or employees with pre-existing back, tendons, ligaments, or muscles injuries.

5.2 Control

Control of manual handling risk can be achieved by using below hierarchy of controls:

- eliminating the manual handling by automation or mechanization of the handling activity,
- using handling aides which don't eliminate the manual handling but do make it much easier,
- modifying the task by:
 - controlling repetitive handling by introducing frequent rest breaks or job rotation to minimize the length of time that an individual employee must perform the task,
 - eliminating awkward postures like stooping, twisting and so on by changing the layout of the workstation, and
 - using a table or lift to bring the load to waist height to eliminate picking up from floor level.
- modifying the load by:
 - breaking down a heavy load into smaller part,
 - using several employees to handle a large, bulky load rather than just one,
 - stabilizing an unstable load by securing it or putting it into a container,
 - marking up a load with an off-center center of gravity so that employees can see where the center of gravity is, and



- attaching handles to a load that is different to grasp.
- modifying the environment by
 - rearranging the workspace to allow more space for the handling activity,
 - leveling an uneven floor for moving and stacking, and
 - supplying additional lighting in a poorly lit location.
- ensuring individual capacities are matched to the activity. For example, if the activity requires unusual ability, then employees must have that ability; if a technique is required, then employees must be trained so that they develop that technique.

6 **Training**

Manual handling training shall provide employees with the ability to recognize the risks and decide the best way to carry out the tasks.

7 **Monitoring and review**

Adherence to this standard shall be monitored by reviewing and keeping records of:

- incident statistics,
- insurance claims reports,
- training, and
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the control measures or solutions.

8 **Change information**

Summary of changes since last revision:

- 1 Introduction re-written
- 2 Requirements re-written and content added
- 3 Medical fitness and response added
- 4 Risk Assessment and planning re-written and content added