

05. MANUAL HANDLING

THINK BEFORE YOU LIFT – PROTECT YOUR BACK FOR LIFE

WHY THIS MATTERS

Manual handling activities are part of many jobs and include lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, pulling, holding, and moving materials. When performed incorrectly, these tasks can cause strains, sprains, back injuries, muscle fatigue, and long-term musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Many manual handling injuries occur because workers underestimate the weight of a load, use poor lifting techniques, or attempt to move materials without assistance. Most of these injuries are preventable through proper planning and safe lifting practices.

A few seconds spent assessing a load can prevent months of pain and recovery.



- Bending back
- Twisting while lifting
- Load away from body



- Bend your knees
- Keep back straight
- Hold load close
- Lift with your legs

USE AIDS WHEN POSSIBLE

- TROLLEY
- PALLET JACK
- HOIST
- CONVEYOR
- FORKLIFT

COMMON MANUAL HANDLING HAZARDS

- HEAVY LOADS**
 - Excessive weight
 - Unbalanced loads
 - Sudden load shifts
- AWKWARD POSTURES**
 - Bending
 - Twisting
 - Reaching overhead
 - Lifting from floor level
- REPETITIVE TASKS**
 - Frequent lifting
 - Continuous carrying
 - Repetitive movements
- ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**
 - Poor lighting
 - Limited space
 - Slippery surfaces
 - Uneven ground
- HUMAN FACTORS**
 - Fatigue
 - Poor fitness
 - Rushing the task
 - Lack of training



SAFE LIFTING TECHNIQUE – 5 STEPS



MANUAL HANDLING RISK CHECK

- Ask yourself:**
- ✓ Is the load too heavy?
 - ✓ Is the load bulky or awkward?
 - ✓ Can I maintain good posture?
 - ✓ Is the route clear?
 - ✓ Do I need help?
 - ✓ Is mechanical assistance available?
 - ✓ Am I physically fit to perform this task?
- If the answer raises concerns, stop and reassess.



COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Twisting while lifting
- ✗ Lifting with a bent back
- ✗ Carrying loads that block vision
- ✗ Attempting to lift excessive weight alone
- ✗ Rushing the task
- ✗ Ignoring pain or discomfort
- ✗ Failing to use available lifting aids



DID YOU KNOW?

Many workplace back injuries result from routine lifting activities rather than heavy one-time lifts. Small strains can develop into chronic injuries that affect work and daily life.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which manual handling tasks present the greatest risk in our workplace?
- When should assistance be requested?
- What mechanical aids are available on site?
- What could happen if we twist while lifting?



KEY TAKEAWAY

LIFT SMART – WORK SAFE

- ✓ Assess before lifting.
- ✓ Keep the load close.
- ✓ Lift with your legs.
- ✓ Avoid twisting.
- ✓ Use assistance when needed.



Your back is for life. Protect it every day.

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

A warehouse employee attempted to move a heavy box without assistance because he believed it would "only take a minute." While lifting and twisting to place the box on a pallet, he experienced severe lower back pain. The injury required medical treatment and several weeks away from work.

Following the incident, workers were retrained on manual handling techniques and encouraged to use lifting aids. Similar injuries have not occurred since. Good planning prevents painful injuries.



SUPERVISOR SIGN-OFF

Discussed with crew by: _____ Date: _____

SAFETY MESSAGE

If it feels too heavy, it probably is. Stop, assess, and lift safely.

