

## 10. Manual Handling

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### **Policy**

The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive of the Society recognise the hazards to health & safety that could result from the manual handling of loads. In order to fulfil their responsibilities under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations, and to protect the health & safety of colleagues, the Society has adopted the following procedures.

### **Elimination**

Where reasonably practicable, manual handling operations will be eliminated by mechanism.

### **Assessment**

As part of the Society's risk assessment process, all relevant manual handling operations will be examined. Where significant risk is identified, the site manager, when localising the generic risk assessment, will record the results of a separate Manual Handling Risk Assessment in the site assessment. In carrying out the assessments, four main criteria will be followed.

### **The Task**

With reference to the actions, postures and movements that are required to complete the task.

### **The Individuals Capacity**

With reference to the personnel who are carrying out the task, and any special considerations that could increase risk (pregnancy, past injuries etc.).

### **The Load**

With reference to its weight, shape, size, sharpness, centre of gravity and any external features that may represent a hazard.

### **The Environment**

With reference to space constraints, floor conditions, steps and housekeeping standards that apply where the task is to be undertaken.

### **Training**

Where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate manual handling operations, persons whose duties include manual handling of loads will receive such training (such as induction training) as is appropriate to protect their health & safety.

### **Manager's Responsibilities**

It is the site manager's responsibility to ensure that manual handling operations are avoided so far as is reasonably practicable. If they cannot be avoided, they should be assessed and, as a result of the assessment, the risk of injury reduced by control measures such as mechanism and / or training.

Before beginning the site specific assessment, the site manager should read the generic risk assessment, where necessary involve colleagues in the assessment process, ask their views and identify manual handling problems.

The assessment should consider site-specific information such as accident records and ill-health or excessive product damage. Particular attention should also be given to colleague selection: health, fitness, experience and knowledge.

The assessment should be reviewed whenever it has become invalid, such as when the working conditions or the colleagues carrying out those operations have changed. Review will also be required if there is a significant change in the manual handling operation, which may, for example, affect the nature of the task or load.

### **Information & Training**

Site managers should ensure that colleagues understand clearly how manual handling operations have been designed to ensure their safety. The training and information given to colleagues must ensure a clear understanding of the following:

- How potentially hazardous handling operations may be recognised.
- How to deal with unfamiliar handling operations.
- The proper use of handling aids.
- The proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Features of the working environment that contribute to safety.
- The importance of good housekeeping.
- Factors affecting individual capacity.
- Good handling techniques.

### **Manager's Checklist**

The following is given as a checklist that all managers should follow to ensure that manual handling operations are managed correctly.

- Has work been organised at the site to eliminate or minimise hazardous manual handling operations?
- Have those handling tasks that cannot be avoided, been assessed?
- Can mechanical systems be introduced?
- Can loads be improved – made smaller, lighter, and more portable?
- Can handling aids, such as trolleys, slides, chutes or conveyors, be used?
- Can the workplace or task be re-designed to reduce bending, twisting, stretching, carrying distances, frequency of handling; can jobs be rotated to avoid repetition and constant exertion?
- Can the workplace be made safer by widening gangways, removing obstructions, keeping floors clean?
- Has allowance been made for individual characteristics of the workforce?

Site managers can implement some of the items contained in this checklist. In other instances further guidance may be sought from the Health & Safety Team.

## **Colleague Responsibilities**

The variable nature of the products and items that are handled (weight, size, and volume) as part of everyday tasks means that colleagues must:

- Use all equipment provided to move stock or items, whilst ensuring that equipment is used safely.
- Be aware of the different nature of stock or items in terms of type of container, weight, handling characteristics (rigid, flexible etc.); also consider the contents (COSHH, perishable).
- Use approved access equipment safely whenever stock or items are removed from storage points above head height.
- Apply manual handling techniques given during training.
- Advise management of health problems which may be made worse by lifting and carrying.
- Must not proceed with the operation if they are unsure or untrained on manual handling operations, until further guidance is sought from a trained person.

For further information on manual handling operations including good handling technique. Please refer to the group specific documentation where available or contact the Health & Safety Team for further specific guidance: [Health&SafetyTeam@midcounties.coop](mailto:Health&SafetyTeam@midcounties.coop)