



Manual Handling

This information sheet gives employers and employees practical advice on the manual handling of loads. There are three key requirements; avoidance, reduction and risk assessment of manual handling tasks.

The work tasks conducted in small businesses require people to engage in many different types of work activity. In some cases this will require a person to engage in a work practice which may involve a significant amount of physical activity. Manual handling is a physical activity which takes place in every workplace and in some cases the activity does not pose a problem; however, it is important to be aware that manual handling can be a potential workplace hazard where the activity requires, for example, a person to handle very heavy loads or lift loads to an unsafe height.

There is a need to provide practical information on useful interventions that can be made in addressing the risk of injury caused by manual handling. The ultimate objective of providing such information is to help businesses to conduct a review of current work activities. Such reviews will help them get a better appreciation of how work is carried out currently and what the potential issues are in relation to manual handling and the introduction of changes to work activities which would result in better ways of working with reduced exposure to the risk of back injury.



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Manual Handling Case Study

Below is an example of how a work task which involves manual handling can be assessed and result in the development of a new system of work with less manual handling.

Figure 1 shows a warehouse employee manually handling a large barrel. The employee hunches over and grips both sides of the barrel; slowly and with great effort and strain the employee tilts the barrel back slightly, and then forward using the weight of their body.



Figure 1

Following a risk assessment of this manual handling task a number of risk factors are identified. The physical effort is too strenuous; the barrel is difficult to grasp, being both too heavy and too large. Figure 2 illustrates these risk factors.

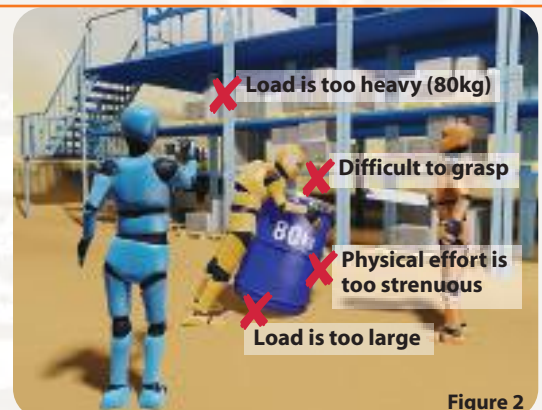


Figure 2

A new system of work is developed. In Figure 3 the employee now approaches the barrel, which is mounted, on a specialised trolley. A safety clip holds the barrel securely in place, and the employee can wheel the barrel out of shot on the trolley easily, thereby reducing the risk of injury.



Figure 3

Manual Handling

The Benefits of Manual Handling Risk Assessment



Problem solving tool



Better way of working



Less manual handling



Good housekeeping



Reduced risk of injury





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