



## Manual Handling Policy

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No member of the public, member of staff, volunteer or job applicant shall be discriminated against on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

### Introduction

1. Unsafe manual handling of Loads can lead to injuries resulting in pain, time off work and in some instances permanent disability.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy Statement.

### Legal Premise

3. This policy encompasses the requirements of health and safety legislation particularly the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992/99 as amended which impose duties on employers to protect employees or other persons who may be at risk of being injured as a result of tasks associated with Manual Handling Operations. They also impose certain duties on staff.

### Policy Statement

4. The OPCC shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, avoid the need for staff to undertake any Manual Handling Operations at work which involve risk of injury. Where this is not possible, suitable and sufficient risk assessments will be undertaken and controls put in place to reduce risk of injury to the lowest level so far as reasonably practicable. The OPCC will endeavour to ensure that information, instruction and training on manual handling is provided for its staff as appropriate.

### Definitions

5. **Manual Handling Operation** – any transporting or supporting of a Load by hand or bodily force including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving.
6. **Load** – any moveable object
7. **Hazard** - the potential of a Manual Handling Operation to cause harm, for instance because of a heavy weight or bulky, awkward shape
8. **Risk** – the likelihood that such a Hazard will in fact cause harm by reference to additional factors such as the number of people exposed to the Hazard and/or the regularity and duration of that exposure

9. **Assessment** – an evaluation of the Risks to safety or health presented by any task which involves manual handling. The evaluation should be followed by the effective implementation of any action necessary to eliminate or reduce and control those Risks in order to bring the likelihood of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable
10. **Mechanical Aid** – any equipment used to eliminate or reduce manual handling eg. trolley, hoists etc.
11. **Line Managers** are responsible for:
  - Overseeing that where applicable Manual Handling Operations are subject to suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment, that Risk Assessments are communicated to key personnel and that Risk Assessment reports are kept on file for inspection/information purposes
  - That there is provision for manual handling training and that all training/re-fresher training records are suitably maintained and kept up to date.
  - Wherever possible eliminate the need for Manual Handling Operations
  - Ensure that all Manual Handling Operations performed by staff for whom they have responsibility are suitably assessed and Risk Assessments carried out by competent person/s (e.g. manual handling risk assessors) with involvement of staff as appropriate
  - Ensure that all Assessments identifying significant Risks are duly recorded, reviewed periodically and communicated to staff involved.
  - So far as is reasonably practicable reduce any Risks identified by the Assessment process to the lowest possible level (best achieved by eliminating or reducing the Manual Handling Operation).
  - Ensure that members of staff who undertake Manual Handling Operations are suitable for the task and receive information, instruction and training/re-fresher training in manual handling as appropriate.
  - So far as is reasonably practicable provide a working environment that is consistent with safe Manual Handling Operations e.g. clear walkways, adherence to a safe system of work as regards to storing items within racking etc.

### **New and expectant mothers and young persons**

12. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 specifically require employers to take particular account of vulnerable groups of people like new and expectant mothers and young people when assessing Risks in the workplace. Managers must consider activities which while not hazardous for other staff, may pose particular risk for these groups who may still be undergoing growth and physical changes.

### **Staff responsibilities**

13. All Staff are required to:

- Attend training sessions if required
- Give prior consideration to any Manual Handling Operation especially:-
  - Does the load really need to be moved?
  - Would mechanical assistance be appropriate?
  - Am I capable of handling this load?
  - Should another person help with this task?
- Carry out Manual Handling Operations in line with information, instruction and training provided including safe handling technique – see section 9 of this policy
- Inform their line manager when they are unable to effect a Manual Handling Operation or where, by doing so, their health and safety or those of others might be put at Risk - *this may be due to lack of equipment, defects in machinery or equipment or environmental hazards etc.*
- Inform their line manager of any new Manual Handling Operation not previously identified and to provide assistance with manual handling Risk Assessments
- Observe manual handling limitations and avoid short cutting processes eg. omitting to use mechanical aid in order to complete the task quicker
- Report incidents involving manual handling to their line manager (see Force Accident Reporting/Investigation Policy and Procedure).

## **Training**

14. Information, instruction and training on manual handling should form part of the staff induction programme.
15. Training for manual handlers will be arranged and provided before handlers engage in any manual handling activity. Refresher training for manual handlers should be provided at least on a 2 yearly basis.
16. Individuals who provide manual handling training should be suitably qualified and competent, and provide training to current standards and in line with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations in force from time to time.

## **Manual handling risk assessment**

17. This can be used for generic Risk Assessment purposes and in instances where a specific manual handling Risk is identified. Trained manual handling risk assessors should conduct manual handling Risk Assessments with involvement of key personnel.

## **Manual handling risk assessment process**

18. The assessment for manual handling should consider the following factors:
  - The physical characteristics of the Load
  - The capability of the handler to perform the task
  - The Manual Handling Operation or interactions between the Load and the handler
  - The environment in which the Manual Handling Operation is to be performed
  - The use of Mechanical Aids to assist handling
19. Following the assessment, an Action Plan should be developed with the consultation and agreement of staff involved to ensure their commitment to any Risk control measures aimed at reducing manual handling, introducing safe systems of work and/or Mechanical Aids etc.
20. Not all manual handling will be eliminated so care and action by the handler is required to help reduce possibility of injury.

## **Identifying problem areas**

21. There are many Hazards and Risks involved in Manual Handling Operations. In general they will fall into the following categories:

### ***Load***

22. The physical characteristics of a Load should always be taken into consideration:
  - Its mass/weight - are you able to lift or move it?
  - Its dimensions/shape - can you hold it satisfactorily?
  - Variation on the centre of mass/centre of gravity - will movement inside the Load make it unstable?
  - Its handles or lack of handles - are they strong enough or do you need some?
  - Its rigidity - is it strong enough to be lifted?

### ***Task***

23. The handler should always consider the task and what it involves. The following situation may cause strain or injury:
  - Holding Loads away from the trunk.
  - Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards.

- Large vertical movement.
- Strenuous pushing and pulling.
- Unpredictable movement of Loads.
- Repetitive handling.
- A high work rate imposed by a process.
- Long carrying distances.
- Insufficient rest or recovery time.

### ***Working environment***

24. Hazards arise from the potential causes of slips and falls, due to the working environment. Consideration should be given to whether there are:
- Constraints on posture - not enough room.
  - Poor floors - wet, slippery or obstructed.
  - Variations in levels - steps or slopes.
  - Hot/cold/humid conditions.
  - Strong air movements - wind or heavy traffic.
  - Poor lighting conditions.
  - Restrictions on movement or posture from clothes or personal protective equipment.

### ***Physical capability***

25. The differences between individuals will affect their Manual Handling Operations.
26. Particular consideration should be given to vulnerable groups more susceptible to risk of manual handling injury than others such as individuals with health problems and those with a disability eg. poor eyesight, muscular weaknesses etc. An individual's age, physique, gender, and fitness levels must be considered when allocating tasks involving manual handling.
27. As a general rule a Manual Handling Operation should be regarded as an unacceptable Risk if it cannot be performed in safety by most reasonably fit healthy workers.

### **How to reduce risk**

28. The steps that need to be taken are:

- AVOID the need for hazardous manual handling
- ASSESS the Risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided.
- REDUCE the Risk of injury from hazardous manual handling

### **Use of mechanical aids**

29. It may be necessary to introduce the use of Mechanical Aids to reduce the Risk of personal injury.

30. However, when the transport of goods and materials cannot be fully mechanised, the stress of handling can be reduced by the use of aids that:

- Reduce the handling forces required
- Improve the grip
- Bring the centre of load mass closer to the body
- Optimise the height for lifting.

31. Mechanical Aids must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and where any defect arises the Mechanical Aid must be taken out of use and the fault reported promptly to the line manager to arrange repair or replacement.

32. It is important to note that the use of Mechanical Aids may still involve manual handling which in turn, may present a Risk to be assessed.

### **Observe Safe Working Practice**

33. The handler should always consider the task:

- Does the Load really need to be moved?
- Can the process be changed?
- Would mechanical assistance be appropriate?

34. The manual handling Risk Assessment may eliminate the necessity for the task to be undertaken.

## **Safe handling of loads**

### **Preparation and planning**

35. Prepare and plan the Manual Handling Operation to include: checking that Load has to be moved; testing Load gently to gauge its weight, stability; considering whether help is needed to move the Load; checking that routes ahead are clear and that there is adequate lighting; checking that it is possible to see over the Load; ensuring that clothing does not impede picking up or releasing the Load and that where necessary personal protective clothing is worn.

### **Use of stairwells**

36. When transporting Loads from one floor level to another always opt to use lifts instead of stairs. If a lift is unavailable consider relocating items (particularly if heavy) near to where they are needed so far as reasonably practicable. If there is no option but to use stairs, use the handrails provided – *this may necessitate splitting Loads and making more than one journey*. If the handrail and/or stairs are in a bad state of repair this must be reported to the line manager to arrange urgent remedial action. Stairwells must be kept free of clutter and obstruction at all times and be adequately lit when used.

### **Pushing and pulling**

37. Safe pushing and pulling of Loads is very much dependent on foot stability and body weight. Stresses on the spine are generally higher for pushing rather than pulling and it should be noted that stresses caused by pushing can be greater than those in lifting. To reduce stresses on the shoulders and rib cage when pushing a Load, lean back on the item and use leg and thigh muscles.

### **Safe handling technique**

38. The handler should be aware of the method that he/she is using when transporting a Load.
39. When lifting, the handler should always think about their body movement:
  - Straight back - is always stronger and does not have to be vertical to sustain the strength.
  - Chin in - this has the effect of straightening your whole back and puts your chest and arms in a better, stronger position.
  - Elbows Close to the Body - the further your elbows are out, the more strain you put on the muscles of your shoulders and back.
  - Use of Body Weight - make sure you are securely balanced and that all your movements are as close to your body as possible.
40. The most important part of the body in anything you do with manual handling is THE BRAIN for constant assessment at all stages of the Manual Handling Operation.

41. Training on safe handling technique should cover:
- How to recognise harmful manual handling.
  - Appropriate systems of work.
  - Good handling techniques.
42. Here are some important points to consider when carrying out a basic lifting operation:
- **Stop and think** – *see above section*
  - **Position the feet** – *feet should be apart with lead leg forward as far as is comfortable*
  - **Adopt a good posture** – *bend knees and keep back in its natural posture, tuck in chin and lean a little over the Load to get a good grip whilst keeping shoulders level and facing in same direction as hips*
  - **Get a firm grip** – *keep arms within boundary formed by legs. Aim for a hook grip rather than keeping fingers straight*
  - **Keep Load close to the body**
  - **Do not jerk** – *carry out the lifting movement smoothly raising chin as lift begins whilst channelling the effort through the muscles in the legs*
  - **Move the feet** – *move the feet and do not twist the body when turning to the side*
  - **Put down, then adjust** – *if precise positioning of the Load is required, put down first then slide into desired position*