

Manual Handling Policy and Guidance

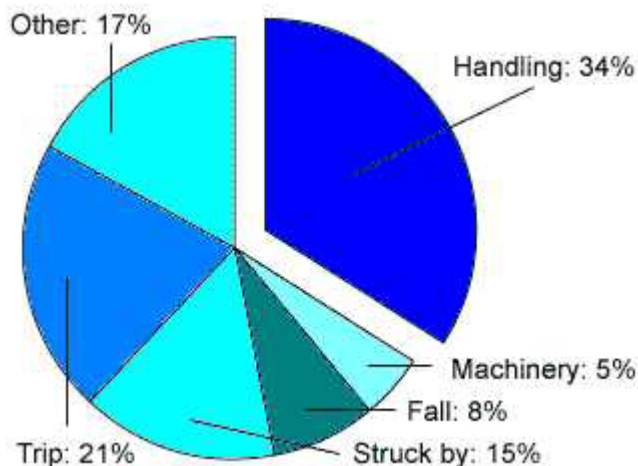
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Policy

Manual handling is the movement of any load whether it is an object, human or animal, and includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying and supporting.

Manual handling accidents account for approximately one third of all injuries at work. Common types of injury are sprains, strains, lacerations, and fractures. In extreme cases the injuries may cause permanent disability. Torbay Council is committed to reducing the risk of manual handling injury to the lowest practicable level



Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the heads of service to arrange for risk assessments to be carried out on all manual-handling operations within their departments, in accordance with the Council's risk assessment policy.

The strategy to be adopted is;

- (a) Identify any manual handling operation which involves the risk of injury.
- (b) Carry out a risk assessment of the activity. Evaluate the significant risk factors and specify the measure necessary to eliminate or reduce the risk. In order of preference these will be;

- Eliminate the task;
- Automate or mechanise the activity;
- Modify the activity;
- Where appropriate support the above points with the provision of suitable training and information for handlers;
- Periodically review manual handling assessments to ensure that developments and changes in the working environment can be accommodated.

Competence

The person or group undertaking the assessment should have an understanding of the requirements of the regulations, the nature and extent of the handling operations within the department, human capabilities, identification of high risk factors and practical steps which can be taken to reduce risks. At least one of the group **MUST** be a trained risk assessor. The health and safety team provides manual handling and risk assessment training.

Introduction

This guidance is provided to enable risk assessors and managers to understand the principles of manual handling operation when carrying out risk assessments (required by the management of health and safety at work regulations 1999) and/or more detailed assessments. If your general workplace risk assessment identifies a significant risk to an employee, or employees, from manual handling operations, a more detailed risk assessment is required.

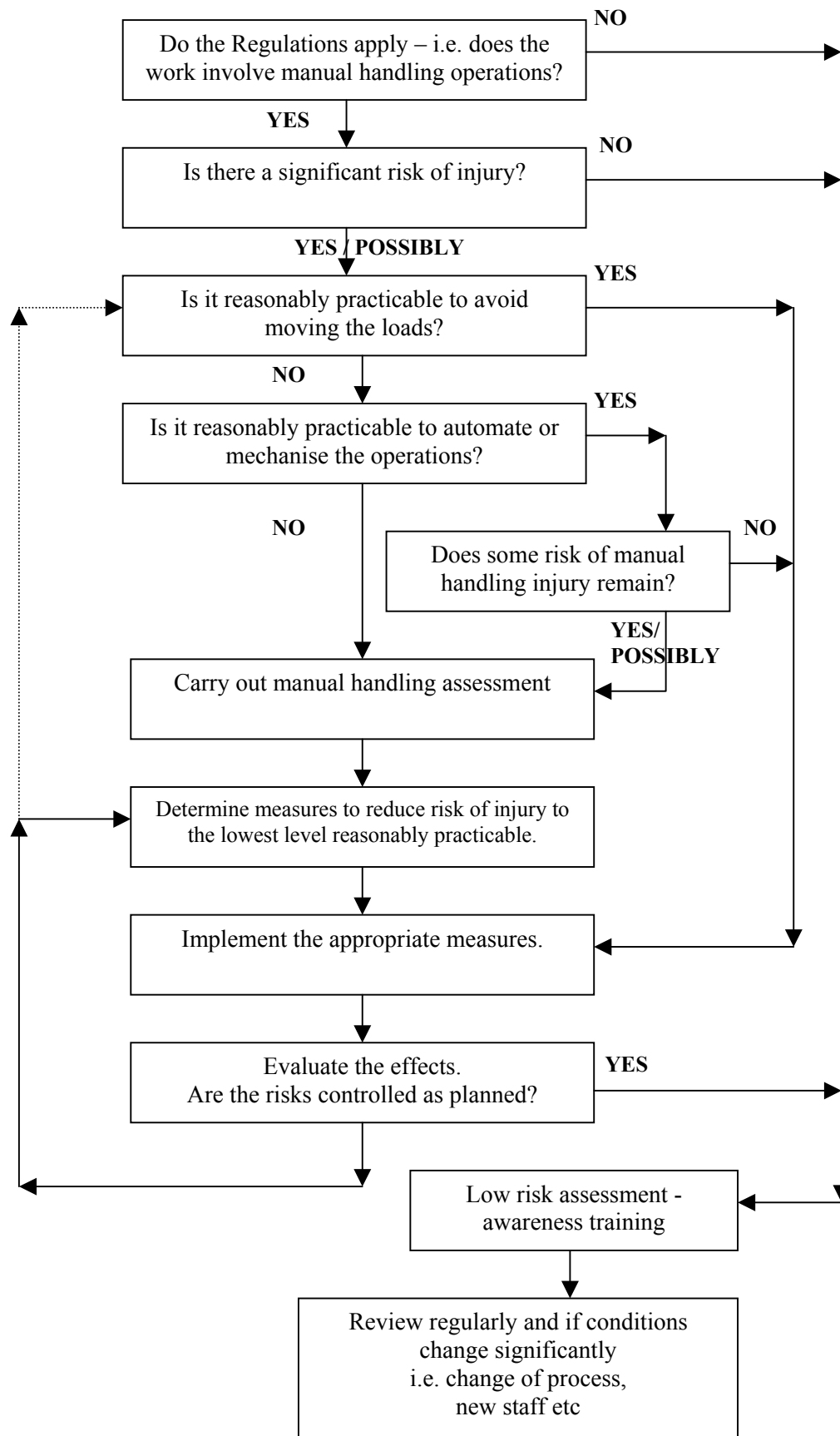
The first question to ask is; do the manual handling operations involve significant risk of injury? If the answer is 'yes', a more detailed risk assessment is necessary (use checklist). If the answer is 'no', enter a low risk assessment score on your general risk assessment but also ensure that staff, at the very least, receive basic manual handling awareness training and the assessment is reviewed regularly. Awareness training can be achieved by;

- Going through a manual-handling leaflet (available from the health and safety team) with your team and record the fact that they have received the information i.e. during a minuted team meeting.
- Arranging for the health and safety team to give a short awareness briefing to your team.
- Getting your team to go through the Back Care (manual handling) awareness course on the Councils health and safety Intranet site. If this is not available to you let the health and safety team know and a CD ROM version of the site can be made available to you. If the questionnaire at the end of the course is submitted to the health and safety team with correct answers, a certificate valid for two years will be issued and a record kept of the awareness training.

In answering the above question, you will have to decide what is a 'significant risk of injury? A significant risk of injury would be any operation with a total risk score of 12 or above on Torbay's risk assessment matrix. However, total scores less than 12 may be considered 'significant risk of injury' under certain circumstances, especially where the operation is repetitive. Employees' physical abilities should also be taken into account, as should a lack of manual handling experience.

FLOW CHART – Manual Handling

How to follow the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992



Requirements

The Manual Handling Regulations set no specific requirements such as weight limits. Instead, they focus on the needs of the individual and set out a hierarchy of measures for safety during manual handling operations:

- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; and
- Reduce the risk of injury from those operations so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where manual-handling operations cannot be avoided, employers have a duty to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health. This assessment must take into account the range of relevant factors. A detailed assessment of every manual handling operation, however, could be a major undertaking and might involve wasted effort. Many handling operations, for example lifting a tea cup, will involve negligible handling risk.

Risk Assessment Filter

The filter is based on a set of numerical guidelines developed from data in published scientific literature and on practical experience of assessing risks from manual handling. They are pragmatic, tried and tested; they are not based on any precise scientific formulae. The intention is to set out an approximate boundary within which the load is unlikely to create a risk of injury sufficient to warrant a detailed assessment.

The application of the guidelines will provide a reasonable level of protection to around 95% of working men and women. However, the guidelines should not be regarded as safe weight limits for lifting. There is no threshold below which manual handling operations may be regarded as “safe”. Even operations lying within the boundary mapped out by the guidelines should be avoided or made less demanding wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so.

It is important to remember that the purpose of the guidelines is to avoid wasted time and effort. The use of the filter will only be worthwhile, therefore, where the relevance of the guideline figures can be determined quickly, say within 10 minutes. If it is not clear from the outset that this can be done, it is better to opt immediately for the more detailed risk assessment.

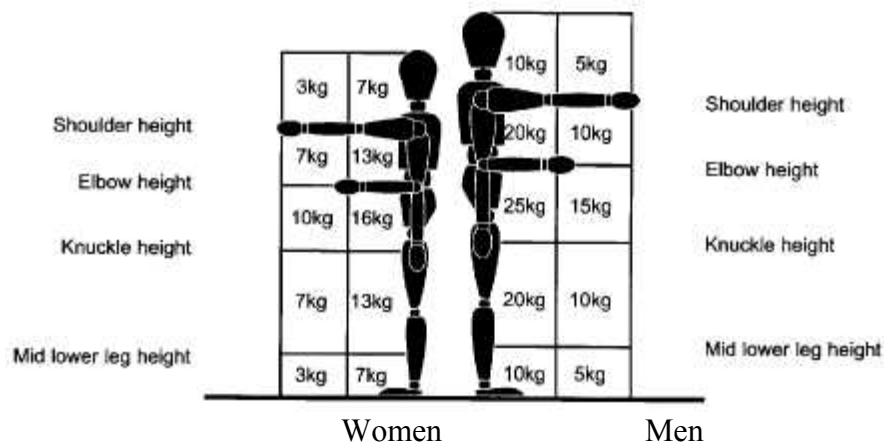
Guidelines for Lifting and Lowering

The guidelines for lifting and lowering operations assume that the load is easy to grasp with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions with the handler in a stable body position. They take into consideration the vertical and horizontal position of the hands as they move the load during the handling operation, as well as the height and reach of the individual handler. For example if a load is held at arm’s length or the hands pass above shoulder height, the capability to lift or lower is reduced significantly.

The basic guideline figures for identifying when manual lifting and lower operations may not need a detailed assessment are set out in Figure 1.

If the handler’s hands enter more than one of the box zones during the operation, the smallest weight figures apply. It is important to remember, however, that the transition from one box zone to another is not abrupt; an intermediate figure may be chosen where the handler’s hands are close to a boundary. Where lifting or lowering with the hands beyond the box zones is unavoidable, a more detailed assessment should always be made.

Fig 1 Lifting and lowering



These basic guideline figures for lifting and lowering are for relatively infrequent operations – up to approximately 30 operations per hour. The guideline figures will have to be reduced if the operation is repeated more often. As a rough guide, the figures should be reduced by 30% where the operation is repeated once or twice a minute. By 50% where the operation is repeated around five to eight times per minute and by 80% where the operation is repeated more than about 12 times per minute.

Even if the above conditions are satisfied, a more detailed risk assessment should be made where:

- The worker does not control the pace of work;
- Pauses for rest are inadequate or there is no change of activity which provides an opportunity to use different muscles;
- The handler must support the load for any length of time.

Guidelines for Carrying

Similar guideline figures apply to carrying out operations where the load is held against the body and is carried no further than about 10m without resting. If the load is carried over a longer distance without resting or the hands are below knuckle height then a more detailed risk assessment should be made.

Where the load can be carried securely on the shoulder without first having to be lifted (as for example when unloading sacks from a lorry) the guideline figures can be applied to carrying distances in excess of 10m.

Guidelines for Pushing and Pulling

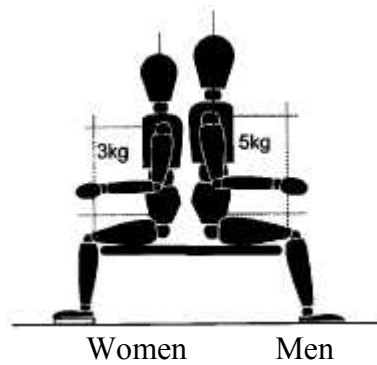
For pushing and pulling operations (whether the load is slid, rolled or supported on wheels) the guideline figures assume the force is applied with the hands between knuckle and shoulder height.

The guideline figure for starting or stopping the load is a force of about 25kg (i.e. about 250 Newtons) for men and about 16kg (i.e. about 160 Newtons) for women. The guideline figure for keeping the load in motion is a force of about 10kg (ie about 100 Newtons) for men and about 7kg (i.e. about 70 Newtons) for women. There is no specific limit to the distance over which the load is pushed or pulled provided there are adequate opportunities for rest or recovery.

Guidelines for Handling While Seated

The basic guideline figure for handling operations carried out while seated, shown in Figure 23, is 5 kg for men and 3kg for women. These guidelines only apply when the hands are within the box zone indicated. If handling beyond the box zone is unavoidable, a more detailed assessment should be made.

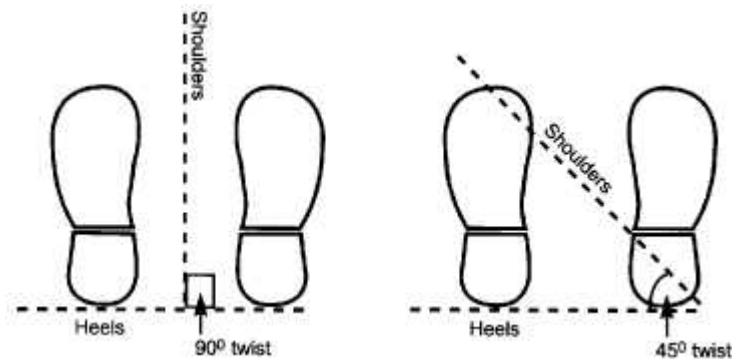
Fig 2 Handling while seated



Other Considerations: Twisting

In many cases, manual-handling operations will involve some twisting (see Figure 3) and this will increase the risk of injury. Where the handling task involves twisting and turning, therefore, a detailed risk assessment should normally be made. However, if the operation is relatively infrequent and there are no other posture problems then the filter can be used. In such cases, the basic guideline figures shown above should be reduced if the handler twists to the side during the operation. As a rough guide, the figures should be reduced by about 10% where the handler twists through 45° and by about 20% where the handler twists through 90°.

Fig 3 Twisting



Remember: The use of these guidelines does not affect the employer's duty to avoid or reduce risk of injury where this is reasonably practicable. The guideline figures, therefore, should not be regarded as weight limits for safe lifting. They are an aid to highlight where detailed risk assessments are most needed. Where doubt remains, a more detailed risk assessment should always be made. Even for a minority of fit, well-trained individuals working under favourable conditions, operations which exceed the guideline figures by more than a factor of about two may represent a serious risk of injury. Such operations should come under very close scrutiny.

Manual Handling Checklist	
Section A: Preliminary	
Job description:	The is a potential serious risk of injury and there are factors beyond the limits of the guidelines
Operations covered by this assessment (detailed description)	Diagrams (other information)
Locations:	
Personnel involved:	
Date of assessment:	
Section B: See over for detailed analysis	
Section C: Overall assessment of risk of injury?	Low / Medium / High
Section D: Remedial action to be taken in order of priority:	
Date by which action should be taken:	
Date for reassessment:	
Assessors name:	

Section B: Detailed assessment

Questions to consider	If 'yes', tick appropriate level of risk			Problems occurring from the task. (make rough notes in this column in preparation for the possible remedial action to be taken)	Possible remedial action. (Possible changes to be made to system/task, load, workplace/space, and environment. Communication that is needed)
	Low	Med	High		
<p>The Task - do they involve; Holding loads away from trunk?</p> <p>Twisting?</p> <p>Stooping?</p> <p>Reaching upwards?</p> <p>Large vertical movements?</p> <p>Long carrying distances?</p> <p>Strenuous pushing or pulling?</p> <p>Unpredictable movement of loads?</p> <p>Repetitive handling?</p> <p>Insufficient rest or recovery?</p> <p>Work rate imposed by a process?</p>					
<p>The Load - are they; Heavy?</p> <p>Bulky / unwieldy?</p> <p>Difficult to grasp?</p> <p>Unstable / unpredictable?</p> <p>Intrinsically harmful? (e.g. sharp / hot)</p>					
<p>The Environment - are there; Constraints on posture?</p> <p>Poor floors?</p> <p>Variations in levels?</p> <p>Hot/cold/humid conditions?</p> <p>Strong air movements?</p> <p>Poor lighting conditions?</p>					
<p>The Individual; Require unusual capability?</p> <p>Hazard those with a health problem?</p> <p>Hazards those who are pregnant?</p> <p>Call for special information / training?</p>					
<p>Other factors; Is movement or posture hindered by clothing or personal protective equipment?</p>	YES / NO				