Moving loads using physical force is called manual handling. It causes nearly a third of all reportable accidents. Manual handling activities should be avoided where possible and risk assessments done wherever they have to be carried out. Any manual handling should be made safer by adopting suitable controls.

**What is manual handling?**
Manual handling is the use of the body to lift, carry, push or pull a load.
List any significant manual handling tasks here:

You should complete the manual handling assessment form on the following pages for each identified task.

**What injuries are caused by manual handling?**
Manual handling can cause injury in the short term through accidents, or longer term damage from bad handling techniques.
Short term injuries include bruises, cuts, hernias, sprained and inflamed tendons, sprained ligaments, ruptured discs, trapped nerves, and crushed fingers and feet and broken bones.
Longer term damage often leads to persistent back injuries.

**How do I plan effective manual handling procedures?**
You need to consider four factors:
1. the nature of the task itself;
2. the weight and type of load being moved;
3. the ability of the individual person carrying out the task;
4. the environment in which the activity is being carried out.

**How can we prevent injuries from occurring?**
AVOID – The most effective way of preventing injuries is to remove the hazard—i.e. remove the need to carry out any manual handling. For example you may be able to use an automated aid such as a trolley or lift. Any alternative means of moving objects must also be assessed and controlled to ensure that they do not cause any new significant hazards.
ASSESS – Any manual handling tasks that cannot be avoided must be properly assessed to ensure that remaining risk factors are all reduced by using adequate controls. You can photocopy the Activity assessment sheets for each task identified.
REDUCE – Can loads be made smaller, can lifting distances or heights be reduced, should some tasks be done by two people, what action can you take to lessen manual handling tasks?
Activity assessment
Describe the Manual Handling activity here:

**TASK**

**DOES IT INVOLVE:**
- Holding away from the body
- Twisting stooping or reaching
- Large vertical movement
- Long distance
- Strenuous effort
- Repetition
- Are there rest breaks?

**CAN YOU:**
- Use a lifting aid
- Improve the workplace layout
- Reduce the amount of twisting etc
- Avoid lifting from the floor
- Reduce carrying distance
- Avoid repetition
- Vary the work
- Push rather than pull
- Provide rest periods

**LOAD**
The size, weight and stability of the load and the frequency of handling are key risk factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Reduce the size and weight of the loads to make handling easier. Ask your suppliers if they can provide items in smaller quantities.
2. Make loads easier to grasp by providing straps under the load, or handles. Increase the stability of the loads which may move suddenly and unpredictably by using baffles in containers of liquids, or additional packing / stiffening around awkwardly shaped items in packing boxes.
3. Wear suitable personal protective equipment such as non-slip gloves, safety footwear or overalls.
4. Make sure that any carrying equipment is designed to the maximum working load’s weight.
How do you make sure that staff are aware of the weight of the load carried for this particular activity?

How do you ensure the load is stable?

What measures do you use to make the load easier to carry?

- Handles
- Smaller loads
- Personal protective clothing:

ENVIRONMENT
This is the area where the manual handling task is carried out, including the space available, the floor condition, lighting, changes in levels and weather conditions.

**Before you lift any load:**
1. Check the surrounding area. Ensure the flooring is level and free from slip/trip hazards, there is adequate lighting and the temperature/humidity is suitable.
2. Remove any obstructions and ensure that there is enough space.

Describe the immediate area that the activity takes place in:

List the checks on the immediate environment that staff make prior to undertaking this manual handling activity:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety point</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>What do you do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to carry out manual handling safely varies between individuals.</td>
<td>Employees who are unfit are more likely to suffer from a back injury when carrying out manual handling tasks. Some staff may have medical conditions such as long standing back ache, arthritic knees and hips etc., or be unfit making them unable to perform manual handling techniques correctly.</td>
<td>How do you make sure that individuals are able to carry out the manual handling activities required by their role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do not allow staff to carry out manual handling tasks unless they have been adequate trained.</td>
<td>How do staff report health or capability issues to you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ensure employees know they must inform you of their capabilities. For example if they have a health problem or are pregnant they will be at higher risk of injury.</td>
<td>The instruction and training should be related to the specific tasks in the employees’ job and should include supervised practice in the workplace.</td>
<td>What training on manual handling tasks do you provide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must train staff on the safe systems you have developed for carrying out all significant manual handling activities in your workplace.</td>
<td>What training do senior and supervising staff receive?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff including Senior Managers should attend practical manual handling training even if they do not do ‘hands on’ work themselves.</td>
<td>This is because they are responsible for the manual handling systems and proper supervision of staff practice.</td>
<td>Where do you keep records of manual handling training?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>