

## **Manual Handling Arrangements**

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### **1.0 Statement of purpose/objectives**

Shropshire Council recognises that manual handling is one of the most common causes of occupational ill-health and injury in the workplace.

These arrangements are intended to ensure the Council meets the legislative requirements of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHOR) 1992, amended in 2002.

### **2.0 Scope**

These arrangements apply to all Shropshire Council employees including part-time, temporary staff and volunteers involved in handling objects.

They do not apply to the handling of people. Instead, please see the Manual Handling of Service Users guidance available on the intranet.

### **3.0 What is Manual Handling?**

Manual Handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. The load can be an object, person or animal. However, as stated above, this document does not cover the handling of people.

### **4.0 The employers' statutory duties**

The law requires employers to take action in the following order:

- 1 Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable\*;
- 2 Where hazardous manual handling cannot be avoided, assess the risk of injury;
- 3 Reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling to as low as is reasonably practicable.
- 4 Provide training which is tailored to the tasks the workers carry out.

\*sfairp – efforts should continue to be made to eliminate hazards or reduce risks until the effort expended (i.e. the implementation of safety measures) is grossly disproportionate to the risk or benefit gained.

## **5.0 Implementation**

Management guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions is provided to assist managers in avoiding unnecessary manual handling for all staff and reducing the risk of manual handling injuries.

References for further reading are provided on page 11.

## **6.0 Compliance**

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Team are available to assist Managers with the implementation of this policy.

Compliance with this arrangement will be monitored via Management self-audits and by OHS Team inspections and audits.

## **7.0 Review of arrangement**

This arrangement will be reviewed by the OHS Team, in three years or sooner if there is a change in the law.

## **8.0 Approving Body**

Consultation - Health, Safety & Welfare Group July 2008

Approval - Health and Safety Forum December 2008

Reviewed - Health and Safety Team June 2014

Reviewed - Health and Safety Team May 2020

Reviewed - Health and Safety Team May 2023

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# **Manual Handling Operations - Frequently Asked Questions**

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## **Appendix 1** Simple Filters taken from Manual Handling at Work: A Brief Guide, INDG143(rev4)

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities - who does what?**

The Organisation - Specific Responsibilities document sets out the roles and responsibilities with regard to health and safety management for all levels of staff within the Council.

### **2. What are Shropshire Council's statutory duties?**

There are 4 key requirements of the Manual Handling Regulations which must be considered:

1. Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
2. Assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
3. Reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable - (definition in appendix).
4. Provide training which is tailored to the tasks the workers carry out.

### **3. How can manual handling be avoided?**

If a manual handling operation has been identified as a risk, then the following hierarchy of options must be considered.

- Eliminate the risks at source - Can the task or the layout of a process be redesigned to avoid moving the load.
- Automate/mechanise

Can the task be automated or mechanised. (Bear in mind that this will introduce other risks which would have to be assessed and controlled).

Consider introducing, for example, a conveyor, a chute, a pallet truck, an electric or hand-powered hoist, or a lift truck. Mechanical aids can also help reduce or eliminate risks from manual handling.

#### **4. When is a manual handling risk assessment necessary?**

Where there are risks from hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided.

The risk assessment is there to help you decide what you need to do to manage these risks.

#### **5. Who should carry out manual handling risk assessments?**

These should be carried out by a competent person who has knowledge of the manual handling operations being undertaken.

Premise Managers and Supervisors, if familiar with the risk assessment process, will be in a good position to undertake the assessment because they will have a clear understanding of the tasks being carried out; the loads being manoeuvred, the working environment and the individual's capabilities.

The assessment should be done in consultation with the staff carrying out the tasks.

The Health and Safety Team can offer advice and support with the assessment process. The approach to manual handling assessment can seem pretty daunting if you have not done it before or for some time so please don't hesitate to ask for help from your Health and Safety Business Partner.

#### **6. Should manual handling risk assessments be recorded?**

Records of the results of manual handling assessments should always be kept to demonstrate the operations that have been considered, the risk levels identified, the control measures in place and the further actions to be taken to reduce the risks to as low as is reasonably practicable.

When actions have been completed they should be signed off and dated on your action list to demonstrate their completion.

Ways of recording risk assessments are given in the following sections, 7 to 11.

#### **7. How detailed should the risk assessment be?**

The amount of detail required will depend on a number of factors, including the level of risk and complexity of the tasks being carried out.

The HSE recommend three levels of detail:

1. **simple risk filter(s)**. Initially identify low risk tasks from those that need a more detailed assessment;
2. **HSE's risk assessment tools**. If the tasks fall outside the simple risk filters above, the Manual Handling Assessment charts (MAC tool) or the Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool will help you identify high risk handling operations (which will require a full risk assessment) and prioritise action to control the risks
3. **A full risk assessment**. Where you have identified the need for a full risk assessment (high risk handling operations), checklists are available for lifting and carrying or pushing and pulling.

Further explanation of these levels is provided in the next 4 sections.

## 8. How do I use the HSE's Simple Risk Filters?

Use the guideline filters provided in Appendix 1 below to help you identify low-risk tasks. They are also available here: [indg143 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/indg143)

The Manual Handling Regulations do not set specific weight limits, so the guidelines are **NOT** "safe limits" for lifting and carrying. They use broad criteria that, if met, the risk of injury is considered to be low. Working outside these guidelines is likely to increase the risk of injury, which can lead to ill health.

Where the tasks fall within the filter guidelines you do not normally need to do any other form of risk assessment. You can record the results from applying the simple filters as part of your normal workplace risk assessment. See here for a template [Risk assessments arrangements](#)

However, if you have individual workers who may be at significant risk. (e.g. new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, people with underlying medical conditions such as musculoskeletal issues, inexperienced new, young or temporary workers, older workers) more detailed assessments are likely to be needed – see the following 3 sections.

## 9. When do I use the MAC tool?

Where the tasks fall outside the Simple Filters above and you want to assess the most common risk factors in lifting (and lowering), carrying and team handling operations. The MAC tool was developed to identify high-risk manual handling and will point you towards the factors you need to modify to control these risks

It cannot be used to assess pushing and pulling operations, for assessing people handling or repetitive tasks of the upper limbs.

The tool can be found here and includes a score card to record findings:- [Manual handling assessment charts \(the MAC tool\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/manual-handling-assessment-charts-the-mac-tool)

An online tutorial on how to use the MAC tool can be found here:

## [MAC tool tutorial](#)

An interactive score sheet for use with the MAC tool can be found here:-  
[MAC interactive score sheet \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

### **10. When do I use the RAPP tool?**

Where the tasks fall outside the Simple Filters above and you want to assess a whole body pushing or pulling operation either for:

1. moving loads on wheeled equipment such as hand trolleys, pump trucks, carts or wheelbarrows (RAPP tool Section A); or,
2. moving loads without wheels, which might involve actions such as dragging/sliding, churning (pivoting and rolling) and rolling (RAPP tool Section B)

It will help you identify high-risk pushing and pulling activities and check the effectiveness of any risk-reduction measures.

It cannot be used for assessing lifting and carrying operations but can be used alongside the MAC tool mentioned above.

The tool can be found here:-

[Risk assessment of pushing and pulling \(RAPP\) tool \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Unfortunately, at this time there is no interactive score card available for the RAPP tool but a score card that can be printed off is provided with the RAPP tool.

### **11. How do I carry out a full risk assessment**

If you have identified high-risk handling operations through the use of the Simple Filters, the MAC or the RAPP tools or if you have identified more vulnerable staff members (such as new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, those with musculoskeletal issues, inexperienced new, young or temporary workers, older workers) you will need to carry out a full risk assessment.

The checklists provided by the HSE and available via the following link should be followed to complete your detailed assessment

[Full manual handling risk assessment: Examples of assessment checklists \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

### **12. How can I reduce the risk of injury?**

Measures to reduce the risk of injury will vary depending on the task. Some examples are listed below:

- Make the load smaller or lighter
- Break up large consignments into smaller loads
- Improve the handles and grips on loads to make them easier to grasp
- Inform staff, and if possible mark on, the weights of the loads and if they are of uneven balance (e.g. the centre of gravity is not central to the load). Suppliers should be able to assist with this.
- Modify the workplace to reduce carrying distances, twisting movements or the need to lift things from floor level or above shoulder height.

- Store heavier items at waist height or the more commonly used items next to the point of use.
- Provide mechanical help, for example, a sack truck or hoist. These should be marked with safe working limits which should **NEVER** be exceeded.
- Change the work routine to avoid excessive work rates and tight deadlines
- Improve the environment – more space, better flooring, extra lighting or change the air temperature to make manual handling easier and safer
- Consider whether team handling is a viable option
- Further information is provided in the following publication, see pages 30 to 48:  
[Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Guidance on Regulations L23 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/publications/l23/)

### **13. When do risk assessments need reviewing?**

A review should be carried out:

- Following an accident, near miss or report of a musculoskeletal injury;
- Where you observe workers breathing heavily and sweating, workers are complaining of excessive fatigue or have a reluctance to do a particular task;
- If there are significant changes in the way the operation is carried out or to the load that is being handled or to the personnel involved;
- If nothing has changed then a review would be appropriate at least every 2 years.

### **14. What information and instruction is required?**

Sufficient information and instruction should be available for an employee to be able to undertake the task without the risk of injury.

This will be identified via the risk assessment process but could include the weights and centre of gravity of loads, safe working limits of handling equipment and safe systems of work. Safe systems of work should be written down and staff instructed to follow these. Records of instruction given to staff should be kept.

### **15. What training will be provided?**

All employees who undertake a manual handling task will be provided with training to meet the requirements of the law and of the organisation's policy.

Training should cover:

- Manual handling risk factors and how injuries can occur;
- How to carry out safe manual handling including good handling technique;
- Appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- Use of mechanical aids;

- Practical work to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely

Frequency of training and refresher training:

- Will vary depending on the employees' capabilities and should be re-assessed on a regular basis with the employee. However, in general face to face Manual Handling of Loads training should be provided every 3 years - available through the Health & Safety Team, Tel: 01743 252819 or email: [health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk)
- The short eLearning Manual Handling course, available on Leap into Learning, should be completed each year in between the face to face training.

#### **16. What happens if an employee raises a manual handling issue?**

Where a problem arises as a result of workplace manual handling the employee is expected to inform their manager/supervisor or person in authority as soon as possible.

If the situation experienced by the employee is a near miss or an injury then an ERP Incident form needs to be completed and authorised by the Manager.

Managers must take all necessary steps to investigate the problem and review their risk assessment. In addition, they must take corrective action where appropriate and advise employees of the measures taken.

If the member of staff has sustained a Musculo-skeletal injury it may be appropriate to involve Occupational Health in their return to work.

#### **17. What needs to be considered when selecting/purchasing lifting and handling aids/equipment?**

Great care must be taken to ensure that any equipment is assessed prior to purchase or hire, in order to identify its suitability for use within the Council's operations.

Ensure reliable suppliers/hirers are used. Use their expertise and advice and involve the employees who will be using the equipment to assist in the process of making a decision for what will be most suitable for the task.

Provide the supplier/hirer with as much detail about the task as possible. Include the maximum weight of the load. Who will be using the equipment and if necessary, show them the area the equipment will be used.

The suppliers/hirers should be able to demonstrate and provide instruction and training on the use of their equipment and enable a trial of the equipment before use or purchase.

All lifting equipment should be marked with the Safe Working Load (SWL).

Make sure that that no additional risks are created by introducing a new piece of equipment into the workplace. E.g. creating an obstruction or blocking an emergency exit.



The following publication gives useful information regarding the selection as well as the use of lifting and handling  
[Making the best use of lifting and handling aids](#)

When new equipment is received, the manufacturer's or supplier's instructions should be kept on record as these will state the technical specifications of the equipment and what checks, inspections and maintenance are required.

**18. How important is equipment maintenance?**

Planned preventative maintenance of equipment to supplier's/manufacture's standards is vital to ensuring the correct operation of equipment.

Competent operatives must undertake all checks, inspections and maintenance of equipment, in accordance to the manufacturer's standards and guidance. Records must be kept.

Lifting equipment will be subject to a thorough examination as required by Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).

**19. Who will maintain the equipment?**

Managers will arrange the maintenance of all equipment.

An annual service or inspection may be required by an external, competent body. Records should be kept of this maintenance, that can be easily linked to the piece of equipment concerned.

Operator's will be expected to carry out a pre-use check and should be instructed in how to do this.

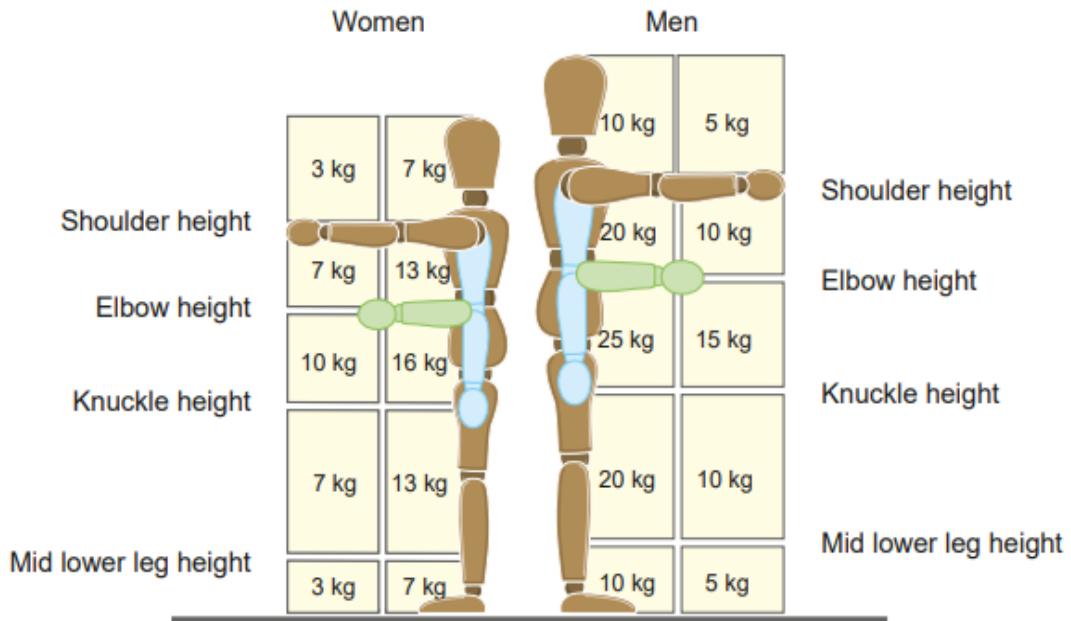
A periodic, more thorough check should be carried out by trained personnel and recorded. This might be once a month or once a quarter depending on the frequency of use of the equipment.

All inspections, maintenance and repairs of equipment must be recorded, and all procedures monitored.

All personnel will be required to report any defects promptly through their line manager and equipment placed in quarantine until competent repair or replacement.

## APPENDIX 1

### *Lifting and lowering risk filter*



**Figure 1** Lifting and lowering risk filter

- Figure 1 assumes that the load is easily grasped with both hands and is handled in reasonable working conditions, with the worker in a stable body position.
- Each box in Figure 1 contains a filter value for lifting and lowering in that zone. The filter values in the boxes are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to happen.
- Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to Figure 1. First, decide which zone or zones the worker's hands pass through when moving the load. Then assess the maximum weight being handled. If it is less than the value given in the matching box, it is within the guidelines.
- If the worker's hands enter more than one zone during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between zones.

### *Lifting and lowering: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?*

You will need to make a more detailed assessment using the MAC tool or full risk assessment checklists (or equivalent) if:

- the handling operation must take place with the hands outside the zones in Figure 1;
- the weight exceeds those in Figure 1;
- the handling involves torso twisting;
- the handling is more frequent than one lift every two minutes;
- the handling is done by a team;
- the handling operations are complex, for example, the weights vary significantly or there are several start and finish locations;
- the lift does not meet the conditions given for using the guidelines, for example, if the load is difficult to grasp or handle;
- the person lifting may be at significant risk, for example, new or expectant mothers, young workers, those new to the job, or those with a disability, significant health problem or recent injury.

### ***Carrying risk filter***

You can apply the filter weights for lifting and lowering in Figure 1 to carrying operations where the load:

- is held against the body;
- is carried no further than about 10 m without resting;
- does not prevent the person from walking normally;
- does not obstruct the view of the person carrying it;
- does not require the hands to be held below knuckle height or much above elbow height.

Where you can carry the load securely on the shoulder without lifting it first (for example, by sliding it onto your shoulder), you can apply the filter values up to 20 m.



### ***Pushing and pulling risk filter***

In pushing and pulling operations, the load might be slid, rolled or moved on wheels. Observe the worker's general posture during the operation. Figure 2 shows some acceptable push/pull postures. The task is likely to be low risk if:

- the force is applied with the hands;
- the torso is largely upright and not twisted;
- the hands are between hip and shoulder height;
- the distance moved without a pause or break is no more than about 20 m.

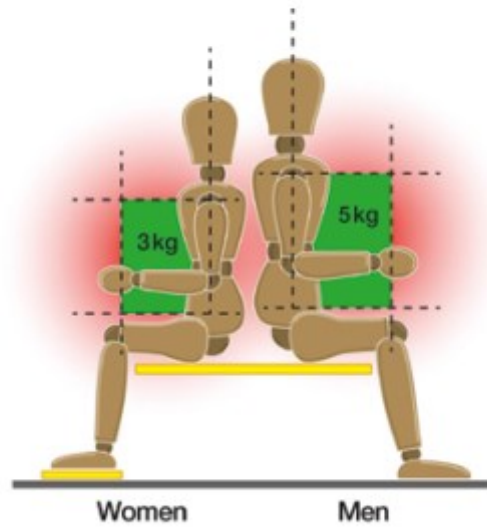
*Pushing and pulling: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?*

If the load can be moved and controlled very easily, for example with one hand, you do not need to do a more detailed assessment. You should make a more detailed assessment using, for example, the RAPP tool or full risk assessment checklists (or equivalent) if:

- the posture shows that the task requires significant forces, for example, leaning;
- there are extra risk factors like slopes, uneven floors, constricted spaces or trapping hazards.

**Figure 2** Acceptable push/pull postures

### ***Handling while seated***



**Figure 3** Handling while seated

The filter values for handling operations carried out while seated, as shown in Figure 3, are **Men: 5 kg** and **Women: 3 kg**. These values only apply for two-handed lifting and when the hands are within the green zone shown. If handling beyond the green zone is unavoidable, you should make a full assessment.