

Health and Safety Department

# Manual Handling Policy and Guidance

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## 1. Policy

Loughborough University will comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended), which places a requirement on the employer and employee to reduce the hazards to health associated with the manual handling of loads. Accordingly, the University will:

- avoid the need for hazardous manual handling operations,
- design and provide safe and ergonomically suitable workplace environments:
- assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided and eliminate or reduce these risks to a tolerable or acceptable level;
- introduce appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- provide equipment to enable manual handling activities to be undertaken safely:
- provide suitable and sufficient supervision, instruction, training, (including periodic refresher training), and information to all staff involved in manual handling operations.

### 1.1 Objective

The objective of this policy is to reduce the risk of injury to those persons who are involved in manual handling activities, to a tolerable level.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all hazardous manual handling activities undertaken at Loughborough University.

### 1.3 Definitions

**Manual handling;** The transporting or supporting of an animate or inanimate load, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, throwing and moving by the application of bodily force to that load.

**Injury;** Injury to any part of the body caused by manual handling. Injuries include; strained muscles, over-stretched or torn ligaments, trapped, compressed or impinged nerves and disc damage (e.g. prolapsed disc).

**Load;** A load is a discrete movable object. This includes, for example, not only packages and boxes but also an inanimate person requiring placing in the recovery position, a lawn mower, pushing a car and material supported on a shovel or fork. An implement, tool or machine, such as a chainsaw, fire hose or breathing apparatus, is not considered to be a load when in use for its intended purpose.

## 2. Key legislative requirements

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (“the Act”), sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and others, those employees have to themselves and to each other. These duties are qualified in the Act by the principle of ‘*so far as reasonably practicable*’. In other words, an employer does not have to take measures to avoid or reduce the risk if they are technically impossible or if the time, trouble or cost of those measures would be grossly disproportionate.

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- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended), make employers duties more explicit. Duties under these Regulations apply to every hazardous work activity. The main requirement is on employers is to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments. Employers with five or more employees need to record the significant findings of the risk assessments.
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended), seek to prevent injury from the manual handling of loads. They establish a structured approach to managing manual handling hazards and a clear hierarchy of control measures for reducing risks from manual handling. These are;
  - avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as reasonably practicable;
  - assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; and,
  - reduce the risk of injury so far as reasonably practicable.
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 require that certain incidents, specific cases of occupational ill health and some dangerous occurrences must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998, require risks to people's health and safety from any equipment, including lifting and handling aids used at work, to be prevented or controlled.

### **3. Duty holder's responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Heads of Schools, Directors and Heads of Professional Services**

Heads of Schools, Departments and Professional Services have a responsibility to ensure that hazardous manual handling operations are assessed and the risks adequately controlled. To this end the Heads of Schools, Departments and Professional Services should appoint a suitably competent person to carry out the responsibilities outlined below.

The Heads of Schools, Departments and Professional Services shall ensure that:

- all hazardous manual handling operations that require a risk assessment are identified, task specific risk assessments undertaken and any risk control measures are identified, implemented and their effectiveness monitored;
- all staff who undertake manual handling operations are identified and provided with appropriate supervision, instruction, training and information, sufficient to allow them to carry out the manual handling task allotted to them. (Training records must be kept and information should be refreshed and updated regularly);
- staff are made aware of this policy and associated guidance and that they understand it and are able to comply with it;
- prompt action is taken to reduce any manual handling hazards and risks identified by employees:
- risk assessments are recorded and retained for at least five years, e.g. in the School risk assessment register;
- risk assessments are reviewed on a regular basis, either annually or when the work changes significantly, or following an accident or case of ill health or when the validity of the assessment is suspected or when the law changes;
- the University Health and Safety Service (UH&SS) is consulted where the residual risk level is assessed as high;
- all manual handling accidents, injuries and near misses are reported to the UH&SS using the

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- internal incident reporting system ([SHE Assure](#));
- Occupational Health (OH) is made aware of any health problems which could affect an employee's ability to carry out manual handling activities;
- act upon any health advice given by OH Advisor.

### **3.2 Safety Officers**

- Monitor the effectiveness of any control measures and make recommendations to the Head of School, Department and Professional Service as necessary.  
In particular Safety Officers are expected to:
  - i) Periodically check risk assessment documentation to verify that suitable and sufficient assessments are in place and/or risk assessment review dates are not missed.
  - ii) Ensure that handling equipment is suitable for the task, that it is maintained and that defects etc are promptly reported and the necessary action taken and that staff are trained in its safe use. Handling equipment found to be below the appropriate standard for its normal use is to be removed from service pending repair or replacement. (maintenance records must be kept).
  - iii) Liaise with technicians, academic supervisors, line managers etc to verify that suitable working practices have been adopted.
  - iv) Report accidents involving manual handling to the UH&SS, using the University accident / near miss reporting procedure and assist the UH&SS in any resulting incident investigations.

### **3.3 University Health and Safety Service (UH&SS)**

The UH&SS is responsible for:

- the monitoring, investigation and reporting (under RIDDOR) of manual handling incidents, accidents and near misses.
- arranging and co-ordinating manual handling training for staff.
- providing advice to Schools, Departments and Professional Services on manual handling risk assessments and other related issues.
- promoting awareness of safe manual handling practices.

### **3.4 Occupational Health (OH)**

OH is responsible for:

- assessing employee's fitness to undertake manual handling activities relevant to their post,
- advising managers and staff on associated problems and health issues,
- providing advice to Schools and Professional Services on manual handling issues, and,
- assisting the UH&SS promoting awareness of safe manual handling practices.

### **3.5 Employees and students**

Employees must:

- follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety;
- make full and proper use of lifting equipment and aids provided for their safety;

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- co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters;
- report any defects in systems, practices or equipment;
- co-operate with the University in undertaking manual handling risk assessments;
- attend training when required to do so;
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their activities;
- inform their line manager or their Safety Officer when they believe that there is a risk of injury to health from a manual handling activity;
- inform their line manager or their Safety Officer when they suspect the risk assessment is in need of review;
- inform their line manager or Safety Officer of any health problem or condition that might affect their ability to handle loads safely;
- comply with any health advice given by OH following referral.

University students are responsible for ensuring that they follow guidance and instructions provided by Schools, Departments and Professional Services. They are also responsible for reporting any incidents, breaches of, and non-conformance with, this policy to their academic supervisor or Safety Officer.

#### **4. General requirements and Guidance; Avoiding, assessing and reducing the risk of injury from manual handling**

##### **4.1 Avoiding manual handling**

If the general risk assessment carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 indicates a possibility of injury from manual handling operations, a more detailed specific manual handling risk assessment must be made, (as required by the relevant Regulations). The first consideration is whether the manual handling operation can be avoided. It may not be necessary to assess the risk in great detail, particularly if the operations can easily be avoided or the appropriate steps to reduce any risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable are obvious.

##### **4.2 Risk assessing and reducing the risk of injury**

The Regulations require that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out when hazardous manual handling is unavoidable. The assessment should identify the hazardous manual handling activities, who might be harmed and how, the likelihood and severity of reasonably foreseeable worst case injuries. The assessment should identify an appropriate range of measures for reducing the risk of injury.

A manual handling 'walkthrough' assessment form is attached as [Appendix 1](#). This provides the means for a systematic examination of all the potential risk elements. E.g. by analyzing the Task, the Individual(s) involved, the characteristics of the Load and the work Environment. **(TILE)**. Further guidance on completing the risk assessment is given in [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#).

To help risk assessors identify how best to reduce risk, a list of suggested risk reduction measures and controls are given as an aide memoir ([see Appendix 4](#)). This list is not meant to be exhaustive and can be added to.

Where the walkthrough assessment does not prove to be suitable and sufficient, e.g. where the assessment does not provide enough information about the hazards or, where risk reduction measures are not obvious or straightforward, a more detailed manual handling risk assessment must be performed. In these circumstances, the H&SS should be contacted for more

information.

To ensure that the assessment covers all potential risks, it is recommended that the workforce be involved in the risk assessment process.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publish a risk assessment tool to assist risk assessors called the "Manual Handling Assessment chart"; <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/index.htm>.

### **4.3 Manual handling training**

University training courses on managing the risks from manual handling operations will be offered by the UH&SS. The training is for SSO's / DSO's and anyone else involved in manual handling activities and / or carrying out manual handling risk assessments. Two courses are offered by the UH&SS and details are available through the "my.HR" webpages on the University website: <https://my.hr.lboro.ac.uk/>

"Manual handling operations - safe lifting techniques", is a session which focuses on the risks from manual handling and how to use safe lifting techniques to reduce the risks to health. It includes a practical element and the course can be customized to the tasks regularly undertaken by attendees in their own working environments.

"Management and risk assessment of manual handling operations" is a more in-depth course, designed to;

- develop a good understanding of the principles and practice of safe manual handling,
- increase awareness of manual handling hazards, risks and controls,
- facilitates practice in carrying out suitable and sufficient manual handling risk assessments.

Contact UH&SS training team on 227532 or 228054 for further information.

## **5. Further reading and references**

- Manual handling; Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended). Guidance on Regulations: L23 4<sup>TH</sup> Edition.
- Manual handling at work – a brief guide, INDG143 (rev 3)
- Making the best use of lifting and handling aids; INDG 398 (rev 1)
- Manual handling assessment charts; MAC tool; INDG 383 (rev 3)
- Managing upper limb disorders in your business; INDG 171 (rev 2)

## Appendix 1

### Manual handling walkthrough assessment

<u>Introduction</u>	
Dept. / Location	
Process(es)	
Assessor(s)	
Date	
MH RA Ref.	
Operation title	
Operation description	
<u>Part 1: Hazard information (TILE)</u>	
<b>TASK</b> (Strenuous pushing, pulling, bending, over-reaching, static muscle work, twisting, some team handling, carrying distances, handling above head height)	
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b> (Competence, strength, health considerations, age, pre-existing injuries/conditions, pregnancy may be an issue and gender)	
<b>LOAD</b> (Weights generally unmarked and difficult to assess, center of gravity difficult to assess, confined spaces, obstacles, fragile contents, shifting contents, sharp metal edges)	
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> (Temperature, insufficient space (people and objects too close), obstacles, slippery floors, stairs, slopes, humidity, weather, slips and trip hazards, uneven floors, changes in floor level, proximity of vehicles. Out of hours working and lone working)	

**Part 2: Hazard information –**

**Reasonably Foreseeable Worst Case Injury (RFWCI)**

<b><u>Injury (e.g. sprain)</u></b>	<b><u>Affected body part (e.g. back)</u></b>	<b><u>Hazard / Severity</u></b>
		<b>Low (1)</b>
		<b>Medium (2)</b>
		<b>High (3)</b>

**Part 3: Likelihood information –**

**(FINDA)**

**Likelihood**

**FREQUENCY:**

**INTENSITY:**

**NUMBER:**

**DURATION:**

**ACCIDENT DATA:**

**Low (1)**

**Medium (2)**

**High (3)**

### Part 4: Initial risk rating

<b>Overall hazard risk rating (H):</b> TILE information taken together with RFWCI assessment.	Low (1) Medium (2) High (3)
<b>Overall likelihood (L) rating: (FINDA)</b>	Low (1) Medium (2) High (3)
<b>OVERALL RISK RATING: (H x L)</b>	Low (1/2) Medium (3/4) High (6/9)  IS THE CURRENT RISK RATING ACCEPTABLE: <u>YES / NO</u>  <b><u>IF NO, WHAT MEASURES CAN BE INTRODUCED TO REDUCE RISK RATING?</u></b>  <b><u>GO TO PART 5</u></b>

### Part 5: Actions required (Risk Control Measures)

Recommendations for action	Action by whom & target date	<u>New risk rating</u>	After additional risk controls put in place what is the risk level (Acceptable/ Tolerable)
Can the existing risks be avoided? <i>(Things you could do to remove the risk entirely, so far as reasonably practicable (SFARP))</i>			-
<u>Existing risk reduction measures:</u>			

<p><b><u>Immediate suggested actions</u></b>  <i>(Things you could do straight away to reduce the risk, (SFARP))</i></p>			
<p><b><u>Medium suggested actions</u></b>  <i>(Things you could do almost straight away to reduce the risk (SFARP))</i></p>			
<p><b><u>Long term suggested action</u></b>  <i>(Things you could do in the future to reduce the risk (SFARP))</i></p>			
<p><b>Assessors signature;</b></p>	<p><b>Date;</b></p>		
<p><b>Line managers;</b></p>	<p><b>Date;</b></p>		
<p><b>Monitor / review date;</b></p>	<p><b>Signature;</b></p>		

## **Appendix 2: Manual handling walkthrough assessment explanatory notes**

### **Part 1. Task : Individual; Load; Environment (Hazard information)**

For examples, [see Appendix 3](#)

### **Part 2. Reasonably Foreseeable Worst Case Injury (RFWCI) (Hazard information)**

**Minor (1)** – cuts and bruises

**Moderate (2)** – strains, sprains, lacerations

**Major (3)** – fractures, muscle tears, pro-lapsed disc

Quantify the hazard. How acceptable or unacceptable the handling activity is?

**Score 1, 2 or 3**

### **Part 3. Likelihood information (FINDA)**

Frequency – frequency of performing the operation (timescales that makes sense e.g. per hour, day, shift)

Intensity – what pressures are there? Externally imposed timescale?

Numbers- how many people are doing the task

Duration of activity, before a change of activity

Accident or near miss related to the operation in the past

Likelihood in relation to manual handling is about the amount of exposure – e.g. how often does the activity happen, rather than the likelihood of the activity going wrong.

**Likelihood – LOW (1) MEDIUM (2) HIGH (3)?**

**Score 1, 2 or 3**

**Multiply together;**

**Low risk(1/2) - Medium risk (3/4) - High risk (6/9)**

Prioritise higher risk and consider if a more detailed risk assessment is required.

### **Part 4. Action requirements (Risk reduction and control measures)**

For examples, [see Appendix 4.](#)

Consider what is **reasonably practicable**

**Appendix 3: Task Individual Load Environment: (TILE) Hazard information**

<p><b>TASK</b></p> <p>Strenuous pushing / pulling          Bending          Over-reaching          Insufficient rest time          Sudden reactive movements          Repetitive handling          Carrying long distances          Static muscle work          Team handling          Bonus schemes          Handling above head height          Handling away from the body          Twisting</p>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL</b></p> <p>Competence          Strength          Mental ability          Ability to communicate          Health          Training          Age          Attitude          Inexperience          Gender          Disability          Pregnancy</p>
<p><b>LOAD</b></p> <p>Centre of gravity          Heavy          Size          Slippery to hold          Difficult to grasp          Fragile contents          Shifting contents          Badly stacked          Hot temperature          Sharp edges          Right way up          Hazardous nature          Unstable (e.g. people)          Too large to see over</p>	<p><b>ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Confined space          Obstacles          Temperature          Humidity          Lighting          Ventilation          Weather          Slip / trip hazards          Holes / slopes / uneven floor          Handrails on stairs          Ill-fitting PPE          Proximity of other people          Proximity of vehicles</p>

## Appendix 4: Aide memoir of risk reduction and control measures

Problem areas (TILE plus other factors)	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><b>Task(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding loads away from the body?</li> <li>• Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards?</li> <li>• Large vertical movement?</li> <li>• Long carrying distances?</li> <li>• Strenuous pushing or pulling?</li> <li>• Repetitive handling?</li> <li>• Insufficient rest or recovery time?</li> <li>• A work rate imposed by a process?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the work repetitive and/or boring?</li> <li>• Is the work machine or system based?</li> <li>• Do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive?</li> <li>• Have workers little control of the work and working methods?</li> <li>• Is there poor communication between managers and employees?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use a lifting aid?</li> <li>• improve workplace layout to improve efficiency?</li> <li>• reduce the amount of twisting and stooping?</li> <li>• avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads?</li> <li>• reduce carrying distances?</li> <li>• avoid repetitive handling?</li> <li>• vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change tasks to reduce the monotony?</li> <li>• make better use of workers skills?</li> <li>• make workloads &amp; deadlines more achievable?</li> <li>• encourage good communication &amp; teamwork?</li> <li>• involve workers in decisions?</li> <li>• provide better training and information?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Individual capability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require unusual capability e.g. above average strength or agility?</li> <li>• Endanger those with a health problem or learning / physical disability?</li> <li>• Endanger pregnant women?</li> <li>• Call for special information or training?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness?</li> <li>• take extra care of pregnant workers?</li> <li>• give your employees more information, e.g. about the range of tasks they are likely to face?</li> <li>• provide more training?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Load(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy or bulky?</li> <li>• Difficult to grasp?</li> <li>• Unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)?</li> <li>• Harmful, e.g. sharp or hot?</li> <li>• Awkwardly stacked?</li> <li>• Too large for the handler to see over?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can you make the load:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighter or less bulky?</li> <li>• Easier to grasp?</li> <li>• More stable?</li> <li>• Less damaging to hold?</li> </ul> <p>The above may be achieved by asking the supplier of externally sourced goods to help, e.g. provide handles or smaller packages.</p>
<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictions on posture?</li> <li>• Bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors?</li> <li>• Variations in floor level?</li> <li>• Hot/cold/humid conditions?</li> <li>• Gusts of wind or other strong air movements?</li> <li>• Poor lighting conditions?</li> <li>• Restrictions on movements from clothing or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove obstructions to free movement?</li> <li>• Provide better flooring?</li> <li>• Avoid steps &amp; steep ramps?</li> <li>• Prevent extremes of hot or cold?</li> <li>• Improve lighting?</li> <li>• Provide adequate ventilation?</li> <li>• Provide adequate space for the movement of people?</li> <li>• Provide PPE that fits, is the right kit for the job, is comfortable and functional.?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Handling aids &amp; equipment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the device the correct one for the job?</li> <li>• Is it well maintained?</li> <li>• Are the wheels suited to the floor surface?</li> <li>• Do the wheels run freely?</li> <li>• Is the handle height between the waist and shoulders?</li> <li>• Are the handle grips in good condition and comfortable?</li> <li>• Are there brakes? If so do they work effectively?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Can you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide equipment that is more suitable for the task?</li> <li>• carry out planned preventative maintenance to prevent problems?</li> <li>• ensure equipment designed to be “wheeled” can move easily?</li> <li>• provide better handles &amp; grips?</li> <li>• make brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?</li> </ul>
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