# MANUAL HANDLING PROCEDURE

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| Queries relating to this document should be directed to the Policy Owner – Jimmy Fenton, w.fenton@ulser.ac.uk OR healthandsafety@ulster.ac.uk<br><br>This document can be made available on request, in alternative formats and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. | |

# HEALTH AND SAFETY
# Manual Handling Procedure

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The current version is available on the Health & Safety website at:
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures - Ulster University

## Contents

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to identify what manual handling is; define responsibilities in respect of manual handling; and provide staff with guidance to reduce risks and to ensure their personal health and safety.

## 2 SCOPE & COMMENCEMENT

This procedure applies to all areas of operation within the University, with effect from October 2024. It applies across all of the University's campuses.

## 3 BACKGROUND

This procedure explains how to keep people healthy and safe. The University will seek to protect staff and students from the risk of injury and ill health from hazardous manual handling tasks.

## 4 DEFINITIONS

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| **Manual handling** | Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, moving or carrying a load. A load is a moveable object, such as a box or package, a person or an animal, or something being pushed or pulled, such as a roll cage or pallet truck. |

## 5 KEY LEGAL REQUIREMENT

- Manual Handling arrangements are covered by the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 and the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992;
- These set out the University's duty of care to ensure employees' health, safety and welfare whilst they are at work and require the University to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved at work.

## 6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the main Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy on the University's website for responsibilities, using the link below.

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/125647/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-Policy.pdf

## 7 AVOID

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 require the University to assess risks to health and safety. Where this identifies hazardous manual handling of loads, the University should also comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 (the “Manual Handling Regulations”).

The Manual Handling Regulations set out a clear hierarchy of measures to prevent and manage the risks from hazardous manual handling; that is:

- avoid hazardous manual handling operations, ‘so far as reasonably practicable’;
- assess the risk of injury to staff or students from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided;
- reduce the risk of injury to staff or students from hazardous manual handling to ‘as low as reasonably practicable’.

## 8 ASSESS THE RISKS

Where you identify risks from hazardous manual handling in the workplace that cannot be avoided, managers must ensure a general manual handling risk assessment is carried out to help decide what is needed to manage these risks. Managers should ensure that relevant staff are fully involved in the risk assessment process.

See Risk Assessment Procedure: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures - Ulster University

Consider risks arising from:

- the task;
- the load;
- the working environment;
- individual capacity;
- any materials handling equipment or handling aids used;
- how you organise and allocate work;
- the pace, frequency and duration of the work.

Make sure you take account of the individual requirements of workers who may be especially at risk, for example:

- new or expectant mothers;
- people with disabilities, which may make it more difficult to do a particular task;
- those returning to work after a recent manual handling or other injury, who may be on a phased return to work;
- those returning to work after a period of absence for any reason;
- inexperienced new, young or temporary workers;
- older workers.

Using the Health and Safety Executive's simple risk filter(s) as a first step can help you to initially identify low and high-risk tasks.

Use the guideline filters for lifting and lowering in **Figure 1** (**Appendix 1**) to help you identify low-risk tasks. The Manual Handling Regulations do not set specific weight limits, so the guidelines are not 'safe limits' for lifting and carrying. They use broad assumptions or generalisations where, if met, the risk of injury is considered to be low.

The filter for pushing and pulling in **Figure 2** (**Appendix 1**) looks at posture during pushing or pulling operations.

For complex issues and/or if the risk rating of the general manual handling risk assessment remains high, please contact a member of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team for further assistance.

## 9 RECORD AND REVIEW

Make a record of your significant findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record should be simple and focused on controls. Regularly review your work activities to make sure the risks are being adequately controlled and that your risk assessment remains relevant.

## 10 TRAINING

Manual handling training is important to further manage the risk of injury if the task cannot be avoided and you have already taken action to reduce the risk and should include:

- manual handling risk factors and how injuries can happen;
- appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- use of mechanical aids;
- how to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling techniques;
- practical work relevant to the job to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely;
- how to report symptoms and injuries.

The manager should register anyone who requires manual handling training by contacting the campus Health and Safety Partner or through the Learning Management System.

## 11 RISKS AND CONTROLS

**Table 1** (**Appendix 1**) includes some practical advice on what to look for when making an assessment and suggests ways to control the risks.

**Use of Lifts**
When using lifts to transport goods, the lifting capacity of the lift should be validated to ensure it has the appropriate capacity. The physical

dimensions of the lift should also be checked to ensure that the load will fit.

**Use of Stairwells**
Manual handling on stairwells should be avoided and instead you should make use of available lifts. If use of the stairwell is unavoidable, ensure you have conducted a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. Contact the HSW Team for advice and guidance as required.

**Rest Breaks**
When conducting the manual handling risk assessment, the number of loads, distance to be carried, duration of manual handling and demographic of the workers must be considered in order to facilitate suitable rest breaks.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992
- L23 Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 ACOP and Guidance

## APPENDIX 1

## Figure 1

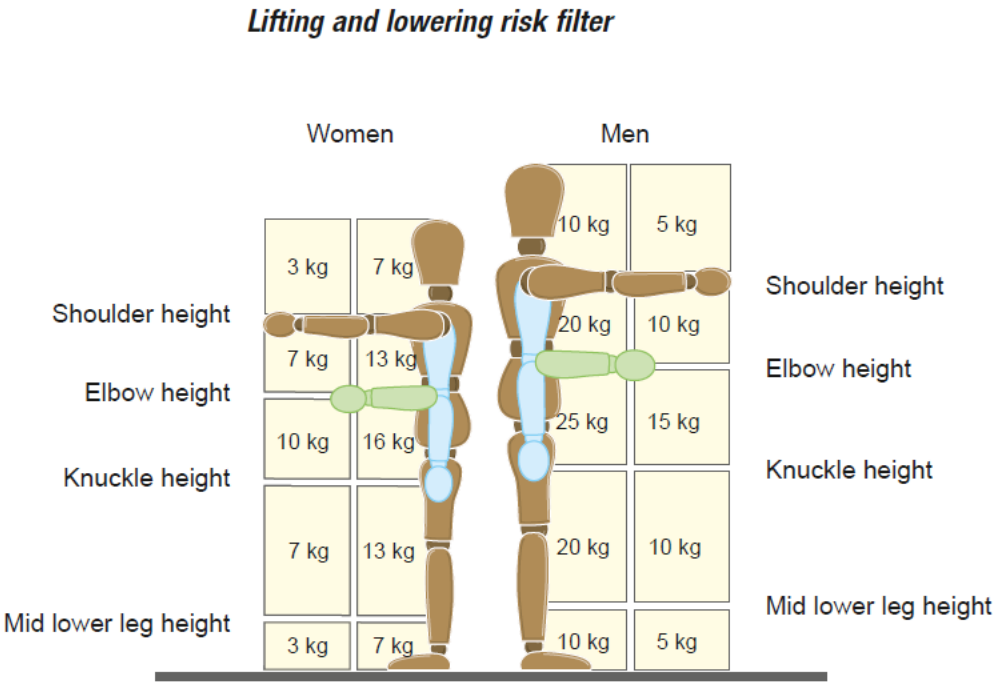


**Figure 1** Lifting and lowering risk filter

**Figure 2**

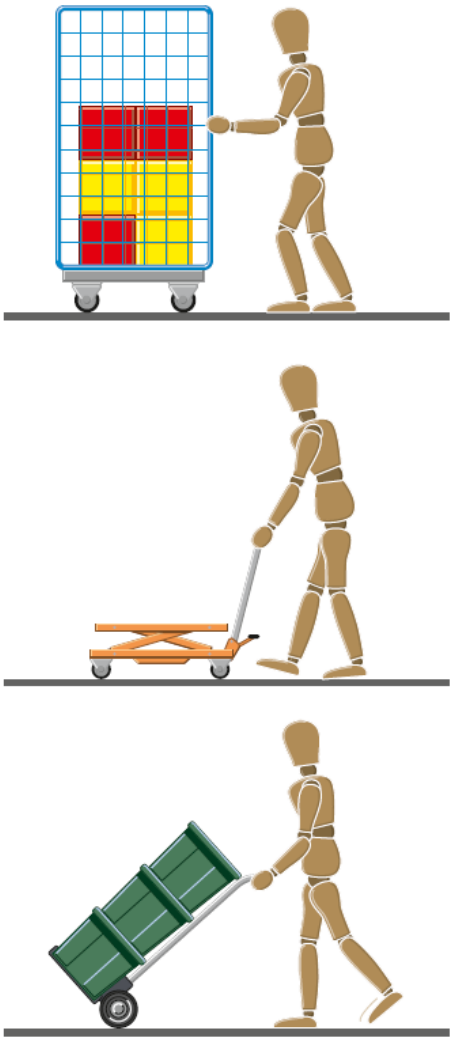

**Figure 2** Acceptable push/pull postures

### *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.

## Table 1

**Table 1** Risks and how to control them

| Risks to look for when making an assessment | Ways of reducing the risk of injury |
|---|---|
| **The tasks**<br>Do they involve:<br>■ holding loads away from the body?<br>■ twisting, stooping or reaching upwards?<br>■ large vertical movement?<br>■ long carrying distances?<br>■ strenuous pushing or pulling?<br>■ repetitive handling?<br>■ risk of sudden movement of loads?<br>■ insufficient rest or recovery time?<br>■ a work rate imposed by a process? | Can you:<br>■ use a lifting aid?<br>■ change workplace layout to improve efficiency?<br>■ reduce the amount of twisting and stooping?<br>■ avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads?<br>■ reduce carrying distances?<br>■ use powered handling devices to eliminate pushing and pulling?<br>■ avoid repetitive handling?<br>■ take steps to reduce fatigue?<br>■ vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used? |
| **The loads**<br>Are they:<br>■ heavy or bulky?<br>■ difficult to grasp?<br>■ unstable or likely to move unpredictably?<br>■ harmful, eg sharp or hot?<br>■ awkwardly stacked?<br>■ too large for the handler to see over? | Can you make the load:<br>■ lighter or less bulky?<br>■ easier to grasp?<br>■ more stable?<br>■ less harmful?<br>■ evenly stacked?<br><br>If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg by providing handles or smaller packages? |

| Risks to look for when making an assessment | Ways of reducing the risk of injury |
|---|---|
| **The working environment**<br>Are there:<br>■ restrictions on posture?<br>■ bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors?<br>■ variations in floor levels?<br>■ hot/cold/humid conditions?<br>■ gusts of wind or other strong air movements?<br>■ poor lighting conditions?<br>■ restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? | Can you:<br>■ remove obstructions to free movement?<br>■ provide better flooring and/or slip-resistant footwear?<br>■ avoid steps and steep ramps?<br>■ prevent extremes of hot and cold?<br>■ improve ventilation?<br>■ improve lighting?<br>■ provide suitable protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? |

| **Individual capacity** | |
|---|---|
| Does the job:<br>■ require unusual capability, eg above average strength or agility?<br>■ pose a risk to those with a health problem or learning/physical disability?<br>■ pose a risk to new or expectant mothers?<br>■ pose a risk to new or young workers?<br>■ call for special information or training? | Can you:<br>■ consider the design of the task?<br>■ pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness?<br>■ take extra care of, eg new or expectant mothers and new/young workers?<br>■ give your workers more information, eg about the range of tasks?<br>■ provide more training?<br>■ get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to? |

| **Risks to look for when making an assessment** | **Ways of reducing the risk of injury** |
|---|---|
| **Handling aids and equipment**<br>Consider:<br>■ is the device the correct type for the job?<br>■ is it well maintained?<br>■ are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface?<br>■ do the wheels run freely?<br>■ is the handle height between the waist and shoulders?<br>■ are the handle grips in good condition and comfortable?<br>■ are there any brakes? If so, do they work? | Can you:<br>■ provide equipment that is more suitable for the task?<br>■ carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems?<br>■ change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily?<br>■ provide better handles and handle grips?<br>■ make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective? |
| **Work organisation factors**<br>Consider:<br>■ is the work repetitive?<br>■ is the work machine or system-paced?<br>■ do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive?<br>■ do workers have little control of the work and working methods?<br>■ is there poor communication between managers and workers? | Can you:<br>■ change tasks to increase variety?<br>■ adjust the work rate?<br>■ make more use of workers' skills?<br>■ make workloads and deadlines more achievable?<br>■ involve workers in decisions?<br>■ encourage good communication and teamwork?<br>■ provide better training and information? |