



Ashdown Safety

Manual Handling

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Manual Handling in the Workplace

Manual handling involves the lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying putting down, or moving of a load. This includes pulling on a rope or lever, as well as directly handling the load.

It is estimated that 6.9 million working days were lost due to such disorders in 2018/19. According to the Health and Safety Executive statistics 498,000 workers suffered from work-related musculoskeletal disorders (either new or long-standing) in 2018/19

Key risk factors with poor manual handling

- **Hernias** – when the body is in a bent position the risk of hernia is increased.
- **Cuts, abrasions and fractures** – including failing to check for sharp edges or nails when picking up a load, not wearing protective clothing and tripping over objects left lying around.
- **Spinal injuries** – the vast majority of back problems are caused by disc lesions. The back is able to withstand considerable stress directly through the length of the spine, but when the back is bent, the stress is concentrated at one point.

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Recommendations for employers

- Assess the manual handling activity in detail
- train employees in good and safe manual handling techniques
- supply suitable information on the load to be lifted
- if manual handling cannot be avoided then minimise the dangers by using trolleys, stacker trucks or similar equipment
- Reduce the need for manual handling in the workplace, either by eliminating completely, or by use of work equipment such as conveyors or fork lift trucks
- provide the right equipment to handle the load safely

Summary

Avoid manual handling operations where possible.

Assess the risks of any unavoidable hazardous operations

Eliminate or control the risk of injury, using an assessment as a basis for action.

“Ensure that a risk assessment is always carried out when manual handling”

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Legal Duties

Manual handling is covered by two main pieces of legislation:

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a general duty for employers to conduct a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees while at work

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) contain more specific duties in terms of manual handling including specific risk assessment and training provisions.

Please contact us using our contact form if you have any queries regarding our Health and Safety services, or if you would like to order.

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References:

1. Barbour (barbour.info)
2. www.hse.gov.uk