

# Manual Handling Procedure

## 1. Purpose

To ensure that workers understand how to identify and assess the risks manual handling poses and addresses correct manual handling principles and techniques and thereby reducing the risk of injury.

## 2. Scope

This procedure outlines how ANC will comply with its legal requirement under the Workplace Health and Safety Act and Regulation 2011 to identify, assess and control hazardous manual tasks. This procedure applies to manual activities undertaken by ANC workers.

## 3. Definitions

### ANC

*All land, property, buildings, warehouses, structures, installations, aircraft, or vehicles owned by, controlled by or under contract or lease to ANC.*

### Worker

*Any person who carries out work for ANC. This includes employees, contract carriers, volunteers, trainees/apprentices, work experience students and labour hire companies.*

### Hazardous Manual Task

*A hazardous manual task means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, or otherwise move, hold, or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:*

- *Repetitive or sustained force*
- *High or sudden force*
- *Repetitive movement*
- *Sustained or awkward posture*
- *Exposure to vibration.*

*These factors (known as characteristics of a hazardous manual task) directly stress the body and can lead to injury.*

### Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

*A musculoskeletal disorder means an injury to, or a disease of, the musculoskeletal system, whether occurring suddenly or over time. It does not include an injury caused by crushing, entrapment (such as fractures and dislocations) or cutting resulting from the mechanical operation of plant.*

*MSDs may include conditions such as:*

- *Sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons.*
- *Back injuries, including damage to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, spinal discs, nerves, joints and bones.*
- *Joint and bone injuries or degeneration, including injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, hands and feet.*
- *Nerve injuries or compression (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome).*
- *Muscular and vascular disorders as a result of hand-arm vibration.*
- *Soft tissue hernias; and*
- *Chronic pain.*

*MSDs occur in two ways:*

- *Gradual wear and tear of joints, ligaments, muscles, and inter-vertebral discs caused by repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions; and*

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- Sudden damage caused by strenuous activity, or unexpected movements such as when loads being handled move or change position suddenly.

## 4. Responsibilities

### *Managers and Supervisors*

Are responsible for ensuring that manual handling risks present in the workplace are identified, assessed, and controlled. Regular inspections are conducted to identify:

- Manual handling risks
- Use of mechanical assistance
- Storage
- Office ergonomics
- Ensuring incidents are documented and reported to the HSR or WHS Officer

Managers and supervisors shall ensure that workers use lifting aids where supplied and encourage workers to apply correct manual handling principles.

In addition, managers and supervisors shall:

- Assist in risk identification, assessment, and control processes where necessary.
- Inform workers about any decisions regarding manual tasks and make resources such as mechanical aids available.
- Provide sufficient supervision to ensure the safety of workers when performing manual handling tasks
- Respond to worker reports of pain and discomfort associated with the performance of manual tasks.

### *Workers*

- Participate in manual handling training programs
- Cooperate in risk identification, assessment, and controls processes
- Use equipment provides for assistance with manual handling
- Follow all safe work procedures which address safe practices for manual handling.
- Report any discomfort experienced when performing manual tasks.

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1. Identify hazardous manual tasks

The first step in managing risks from carrying out manual tasks is to identify those tasks that have the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Hazardous manual tasks are ones that involve one or more of the following:

- Repetitive or sustained force
- High or sudden force
- Repetitive movement
- Sustained or awkward posture
- Exposure to vibration

Hazards that arise from manual tasks generally involve interaction between a worker and:

- The work tasks and how they are performed.
- The tools, equipment, and objects handled.
- The physical work environment

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### 5.1.1. How to identify hazardous manual tasks

Manual task hazards can be identified by:

- Reviewing the duties in position descriptions to identify manual task risks.
- Consulting with workers who are involved in manual tasks to find out what hazards are involved. For example, you could ask workers to identify tasks that:
  - Are difficult to do (or appear harder than they should be)
  - Are very tiring (muscle fatigue reduces work capacity)
  - Are awkward or dangerous (for example, difficulty controlling loads)
  - Cause discomfort
- Analysing injury register statistics to find out the number of manual task injuries, the cause of these injuries and where they are coming from.
- Observe how workplace equipment is set up, and the associated workflows between different areas.
- Observe workers performing manual tasks, particularly tasks that require awkward postures, movement and repetitive movements.
- Perform workplace inspections to observe how tools, materials and equipment are stored; and
- Investigating manual task incidents to identify what caused the injury.

### 5.2. Assessing the risk of Hazardous manual tasks

A risk assessment allows you to examine the characteristics of a manual task in more detail.

You should carry out a risk assessment for any manual tasks that you have identified as being hazardous, unless the risk is well-known, and you know how to control it. A risk assessment can help determine:

- Which postures, movements and forces of the task pose a risk.
- Where during the task they pose a risk.
- Why they are occurring; and
- What needs to be fixed.

When conducting a risk assessment of manual tasks, the following factors must be taken into consideration:

- The posture of the worker.
- The forces exerted by the worker and any forces exerted on the worker by the object.
- Speed of movements by the worker.
- Exposure of the worker to vibration; and
- The duration and frequency of the task.

You must also take into consideration the possible sources of the risks including:

- The layout or design of the work area. For example, is the area set up to prevent awkward postures.
- The work environment. Sources of risk in a work environment include temperature, humidity, floor surfaces, lighting and obstructions.
- Consider the nature, size, weight, or number of items handled including any tools used; and

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- Work organisation and the system of work. For example, the pace of the work and time constraints.

These sources of risk can also make the task more difficult to perform and therefore increase the risk of MSD.

### 5.3. Controlling the risks

You must aim to eliminate any hazardous manual tasks and any associated risks. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, then controls must be put in place to minimise the risk.

Control measures should be aimed at eliminating or minimising the frequency, magnitude and duration of movements, forces, and postures by changing the source of risk: the work area, tool, load, environment, method of handling and/or the way work is organised.

Hierarchy of control		Examples of control measures
Level 1	Elimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automate the manual task (such as using remote controls)</li> <li>• Deliver goods directly to the point of use to eliminate multiple handling</li> </ul>
Level 2	Substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace heavy items with those that are lighter, smaller and/or easier to handle</li> <li>• Replace hand tools with power tools to reduce the level of force required to do the task</li> </ul>
	Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolate vibrating machinery from the user, for example by providing fully independent seating on mobile plant</li> </ul>
	Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use mechanical lifting aids</li> <li>• Provide workstations that are height adjustable</li> </ul>
Level 3	Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotate workers between different tasks</li> <li>• Train workers to use control measures implemented when carrying out normal tasks</li> </ul>
	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat resistant gloves for handling hot items</li> <li>• Shock absorbent shoes for work on hard concrete floors</li> </ul>

Note: When implementing a measure, you may choose one or a combination of controls to reduce or eliminate the risk.

#### 5.3.1. Training

Training in the type of control measures implemented should be provided during induction into a new job and as part of on-going training needs. Training should be provided to workers required to carry out, supervise or manage hazardous manual tasks.

ANC will engage 3<sup>rd</sup> party training providers from time to time (BackSafe). Any training will be contextualised to ANC business needs and known workplace hazards. Training records for this training will be filed accordingly.

The training should include information on:

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- Manual tasks risk management, including the characteristics of hazardous manual tasks.
- Specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them.
- How to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment, and safe work procedures; and
- How to report a problem or maintenance issues.

## 5.4. Review controls

Control measures that have been implemented must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to make sure they work as planned and to maintain a work environment that is without risks to health and safety.

Control measures may be reviewed using the same methods as the initial hazard identification step. Consult your workers involved in the manual task and their health and safety representatives and consider the following:

- Are the controls measures working effectively in both their design and operation, without creating new risks?
- Are workers actively involved in the risk management process? Are they openly raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly?
- Have new work methods or new equipment reduced physical strain or difficulty?
- Has instruction and training on hazardous manual tasks and the implemented control measures been successful?
- Is the frequency and severity of MSDs reducing over time?
- Is an alteration planned to any structure, plant or process that is likely to result in a worker being exposed to a hazardous manual task?
- Has an incident occurred as a result of a worker being exposed to a hazardous manual task?
- If new information becomes available, does it indicate current controls may no longer be the most effective?

If problems are found, go back through the risk management steps, review your information, and make further decisions about risk control.

## 6. Related Documents

- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Form
- Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)

## 7. References

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Safe Work Australia Code of Practice - Hazardous Manual Tasks

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