SAFE WORK PROCEDURES
MANUAL HANDLING

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. A risk assessment must be carried out of all tasks involving bodily exertion to identify activities which could result in injury to a person carrying out that task.
2. **Information, training or instruction in manual handling techniques must not be used as the sole or primary means of controlling risk unless altering the workplace, environmental conditions, the systems of work, the objects used in the task, or the use of mechanical aids are not practicable.**
3. All persons required to lift or carry loads must be trained in correct manual handling techniques, including task assessment and team lifting.

Sequence	Identified hazards	Key processes to be followed	Precautions / PPE required
1. Assessing risk from manual handling	Weight, size and shape of the object to be lifted	**There is no "safe" maximum load that a person may lift.** The muscular effort required to lift, lower or carry a load is determined by the size, shape and nature of the object, and the postures, movements, forces, frequency and duration involved in the task.	Bigger, heavier and bulkier loads require greater effort to move them and impose a higher risk.
	Distance of the load from the body	A load at a greater distance from the body will impose a greater stress on the body than a similar load at a closer distance.	The stress placed on the body is a function of load x distance. (The stress on the body is doubled as the distance from the body is doubled).
	Height required to lift	Lifting a load for a higher distance places greater strain on the body.	
	Frequency and duration	Increased frequency and duration of lifting increase the risk of injury.	
	Unequal loading on the body	Lifting or carrying a load to one side or in one hand puts more stress on the body than handling the load with both hands.	
2. Identifying hazardous tasks	Task factors	The following tasks must be analysed for risks due to manual handling – • tasks with which an injury due to overexertion can be associated, • tasks which involve repetitive or sustained application of force, awkward postures, movements, high force, or sustained vibration, • manual handling of live people or animals, and • manual handling of loads that are unstable, unbalanced or difficult to hold.	Similar tasks will present different levels of risk to different persons due to variations in body size, strength, age, gender, experience, health, and fatigue levels.
	Environmental factors	Persons will be at greater risk of injury if they are exposed to high air temperatures, high humidity or low temperature.	Risk of injury is increased when wearing heavy or thick clothing.
3. Controlling workplace factors	Workplace layout	Eliminate or reduce bending movements and postures by – • providing adjustable height work tables and workstations • minimise lifting and lowering of work objects, and • providing enough work space to allow upright working posture. Eliminate or reduce twisting, reaching, pushing, pulling, holding or carrying movements when handling, carrying or storing items and materials.	Match work height to worker wherever possible. Use mechanical aids to handle and transport loads. Store heavier and frequently used items at waist level where possible.
	Workstation design	Design workstations so that workers are in an upright position with shoulders lowered and upper arms close to the body, with working height and objects roughly level with the worker's elbows (sitting or standing).	Provide adjustable workstations to make work height suitable for the person and the task.

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3. Controlling workplace factors (continued)	Working position	Determine the most appropriate working position for the task to be performed, taking into account the frequency and duration of the task, and the objects, equipment and tools required. Provide mixture of tasks where possible to allow a variety of postures and movements, including a mixture of standing and sitting tasks. Provide opportunities for workers performing seated or standing tasks to vary their postures and movements.	Provide properly designed adjustable chairs for persons working in a seated position. Provide stool or support, footrest and insulating floor covering (matting, duckboards, etc.) for persons working in a standing position.
	Design of work and work flow	Redesign size, shape and weight of objects to eliminate handling risks. Ensure that tools, plant and equipment meet ergonomic guidelines. Organise flow of work to reduce or eliminate overload during peak periods. Reduce prolonged exposure to movements and postures by rotating tasks.	Implement purchasing controls to ensure that materials, tools and equipment do not pose a risk of injury to workers.
4. Provision of aids	Lifting of loads Movement of loads	Provide mechanical aids to move and handle loads (e.g., conveyors, cranes, hoists, forklifts, pallet jacks, trolleys, etc.). Ensure that items for moving loads that require the use of human effort to move (trolleys, pallet jacks, pedestrian forklifts, etc.) are maintained in a safe operating condition, and are not loaded in excess of their rated capacity.	Use load balancers and supports to move loads and tools. Ensure that the working load limit (WLL) is clearly displayed on equipment to prevent overloading.
5. Training of workers	Movement of loads Manual movement of loads	Training needs will depend on the task(s) to be carried out and the risks. Workers must understand – • what sort of manual handling is hazardous • the effects on the body, and how injury can be prevented, and • how to select and use appropriate risk controls such as mechanical aids and safe systems of work. Training in how to select and use appropriate manual handling techniques should be conducted by an appropriately skilled person, who is conversant with the causes, effects and prevention of manual handling injuries. The training should include information pertinent to the types of loads to be moved, correct lifting postures and techniques, and team lifting procedures where team lifting is carried out on a regular basis. Supervisory staff must also be trained in safe manual handling techniques.	**Information, training or instruction in manual handling techniques must not be used as the sole or primary means of controlling risk unless altering the workplace, environmental conditions, the systems of work, the objects used in the task, or the use of mechanical aids are not practicable.** The capacity of a team during a lift is reduced by 10-20% for a 2 person lift and more for 3 or more.

PRECAUTIONS: The following precautions are to be observed in areas where these procedures are carried out.