

**AGENDA ITEM 9
REPORT NO. VAL/5/20**

THE HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Manual Handling Policy and Guidance

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Policy Statement

The Board recognises its responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and to ensure that its workplaces are safe and without risk to health, in accordance with the general requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

It is the policy of the Board that, so far as is reasonably practicable, persons are not exposed to risks to their health due to manual handling activities at work.

This policy applies to all employees of the Board, without exception, and establishes minimum standards. It may also be supplemented by further policies that set out specific detail relating to departmental needs.

The Board's policy is to establish a 'minimal lifting' and 'safer handling' approach to the manual handling of loads. This is subject to an ergonomic risk assessment process.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure implementation of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 and associated health and safety regulations throughout the Board;
- Reinforce the commitment to maintaining good practice in reducing the risks of manual handling accidents, injuries and their associated costs;
- Create a safe and satisfactory environment for the movement and transfer of animate and inanimate loads, and to ensure that the risks associated with manual handling activities are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Establish the principle of a minimal lifting approach to the moving and handling of loads subject to a manual handling risk assessment (Appendix 1).

Legal requirements

The main legislative requirements relating to manual handling however are contained in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/backpain/employers/mhor.htm>).

These regulations require employers, as far as is reasonably practicable, to:

- Avoid manual handling wherever possible;
- Assess the risk of those manual handling activities that cannot be avoided;
- Reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level possible.

Definition of Manual Handling

Manual handling operations means any transporting or supporting of a load, (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving) by hand or by bodily force.

The Regulations apply to the manual handling of loads, i.e. by human effort, as opposed to mechanical handling by crane, lift trucks etc. Introducing mechanical assistance, for example a sack truck or a powered hoist, may reduce but not eliminate manual handling since human effort is still required to move, steady or position the load.

Responsibilities

The Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the moving and handling guidance is implemented;
- Ensuring the recommendations for eliminating or reducing risk are put into practice, as far as is reasonably practicable, following the assessment or annual review;
- Recording the arrangements for managing moving and handling risks, outlining appropriate responsibilities, channels of communication and monitoring;
- Taking account of risks created by moving and handling in the design of new facilities, equipment procurement or new work practices in liaison with the Highland Council's Safety and Wellbeing Team and any other relevant Board staff.

Line/Team Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying moving and handling risks within their sphere of responsibility and, as appropriate working with relevant staff to identify measures to reduce risk;
- Assessing training requirements and ensuring provision of appropriate and relevant training;
- Ensuring that moving and handling risk assessments are carried out in line with corporate risk assessment guidance;
- Ensuring that where the risk assessment has identified a need for employees to be trained on the use of specific equipment, that this training is provided, and appropriate records are maintained;
- Being fully aware of the issues highlighted within current moving and handling risk assessments carried out for their area;
- Putting into practice, as far as is reasonably practicable, any control measures identified through risk assessments or required in relation to this guidance;
- Recording details of action plans for reducing risk and passing information to senior managers to ensure risk control measures are prioritised;
- Ensuring that incident forms are completed for all injuries or near misses involving moving and handling in line with accident reporting guidelines;
- Investigating any incident related to moving and handling and taking appropriate measures to reduce or eliminate the risk of any recurrence, seeking advice from the Highland Council's Health and Safety Adviser;
- Taking account of the risks created by moving and handling in the design of new facilities or work practices, and taking advice when necessary;
- Ensuring equipment is maintained and maintenance recorded in line with current legislation;
- Ensuring faulty or damaged equipment is repaired or replaced in a timeous manner;
- Maintaining records of employees who receive training, both at induction and refresher training sessions, including any instruction on equipment or workplace assessment;
- Facilitating workplace assessments and self-assessments for employees as part of ongoing refresher training;
- Contributing to helping employees who have musculoskeletal symptoms;
- Recommending referral to the Occupational Health Service, where appropriate.

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of colleagues and Board users;

- Using moving and handling equipment provided, in an appropriate manner and in accordance with instructions and training undertaken;
- Not attempting to use moving and handling equipment they have not been trained to use, but identify this as a training need to their line manager and seek guidance;
- Attending appropriate Manual Handling training, and following safe working practices;
- Reporting all accidents / incidents involving moving and handling including near misses;
- Reporting any unsafe moving and handling practice to their line manager;
- Reporting any equipment that is faulty, damaged or not fit for purpose.

Avoidance of Manual Handling

As with all forms of risk assessment the most effective method of control is to eliminate the hazard where possible.

Risk of Injury

A judgement has to be made regarding the nature and likelihood of injury associated with any manual handling activity. Detailed assessment may not be necessary if the handling operations can be avoided or the risk of injury is clearly **LOW**.

If removal of manual handling operations cannot be achieved, then the following questions should be asked:

- Can the operations be automated?
- Can the operations be mechanised?

Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the need to undertake manual handling **and a risk of injury remains** then a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out.

Assessment of Risk

Where the initial assessment of a manual handling process determines that there is a risk of injury then a more specific assessment is required taking into account the following factors:

- The task
- The load
- The working environment
- Individual capability

Detailed assessments should only be undertaken by **competent staff**.

Reducing the risk of Injury

Where manual handling activities cannot be avoided then it will be necessary as part of the assessment process to take appropriate steps to: "**reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable**".

The following is a list of suggested measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of injury. The most appropriate or combination of actions must be determined in relation to each individual activity.

- **Ergonomics** – Fit the operation to the individual rather than the other way round.
- **Mechanical Assistance** – The use of hoists, trolleys, sack trucks and conveyors etc.
- **Involve the Workforce** – Employees and their representatives should be involved in the development of safe systems of work.
- **Use Industry Specific Guidance** – can give valuable information on known effective preventive action.
- **Improve task layout** – ensure optimum position for storing loads etc.

- **Use the body more efficiently** – need for training in correct handling technique.
- **Improve the work routine** – Minimise the need for fixed postures, use flexible rest periods, job rotation etc.
- **Team handling** – Teams of 2 or more can assist where a load is too heavy, difficult or unsafe for an individual.
- **Make the load lighter** – Liquids and powders etc. could be packaged in smaller containers.
- **Make the load smaller or easier to manage** – Wherever possible specify small or manageable quantities when ordering materials etc.
- **Make it easier to grasp** – Consider fitting handles, hand grips or indents to improve the handlers' grasp.
- **Make it less damaging to hold** – Ensure surfaces are clean and provide suitable PPE if sharp corners or edges cannot be avoided.
- **Remove space constraints** – Provide sufficient clear floor space and sufficient room to manoeuvre the object to be lifted.
- **Ensure floor surfaces are sound** – Temporary work platforms should be firm and stable, avoid wet floors and steep slopes.
- **Working environment** – Ensure that temperature, ventilation, heating and lighting are suitable for the task.
- **Personal considerations** – Take account of employee health problems such as bad backs, knees, hips etc. which could affect their manual handling capability. Pregnancy also demands special consideration. Fitness and strength are important, also whether a new task will involve unaccustomed exertion.

Further advice on risk reduction measures can be obtained by contacting the Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Team at Highland Council.

Training

Training in Manual Handling techniques can help reduce the risk of injury, but all other aspects of risk reduction outlined in Risk of Injury must also be applied as training alone will be an insufficient control measure.

The Board will deliver training in line with current best practice.

Monitoring and review

The control measures introduced as part of the risk reduction process must be regularly monitored to ensure that they are effective in preventing injury.

Any manual handling assessment must be reviewed if there is a reason to suspect it is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the manual handling operations to which it relates.

Manual handling assessments must also be reviewed if a reportable injury occurs. In this case the manager responsible for the work activity being undertaken at the time of injury will be required to submit a copy of the revised assessment together with the internal accident report form, to the Office & Support Manager.

A review of this document will be regularly undertaken.

Manual Handling Risk Assessment And Inanimate Object Manual Handling Plans

Activity _____	Date _____
Are there tasks that involve manual handling (moving and handling)?	Yes No
Are manual handling risk assessments / manual handling plans required?	Yes No
If 'yes', the remainder of this form must be completed.	
If 'no', is it envisaged that a manual handling risk assessment will be required in the near future?	Yes No
If 'yes' state review date. _____	

Assessors name: _____ Base: _____

Section 1: Summary of Manual Handling Tasks

Manual handling activity	Level of manual handling <small>Please circle all relevant.</small>	Equipment used for task	Date of risk Assessment/ Manual Handling plan	Review date	Manager initial
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				
	Significant Repetitive Hazardous Restricted				

List compiled by: _____ Date: _____

Section 2: Assessment of the Task, Load, Environment and Individual Capability

THE TASK <i>Briefly describe the task/purpose of the movement</i>		
Does the task involve	yes	Additional information
1. Holding away from the trunk?		
2. Twisting?		
3. Stooping?		
4. Reaching upwards?		
5. Carrying?		
6. Strenuous pushing/pulling?		
7. Unpredictable movement?		
8. Frequent handling?		
9. Insufficient rest or recovery time?		

THE LOAD		
Is the load	yes	Additional information
10. Heavy?		
11. Bulky or unwieldy?		
12. Difficult to grasp?		
13. Unstable or unbalanced		
14. Sharp, hot or otherwise potentially damaging?		
15. Other?		

THE ENVIRONMENT - <i>Specify the environment(s) in which the task takes place</i>		
In this environment are there	yes	Additional information
16. Space constraints affecting posture?		
17. Obstacles?		
18. Variations in level of floors and work surfaces?		
19. Uneven, slippery or unstable floors?		
20. Poor lighting?		
21. Extreme temperatures / humidity?		
22. Other hazards?		

THE INDIVIDUAL		
Individual capabilities of employees Do the staff need:	yes	Additional information
23. Significant strength?		
24. Special training?		
25. Additional information, knowledge, training or other support?		
26. Would the task increase risks for those who are pregnant or have a health problem?		

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING RISKS:

OTHER EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

TRAINING REQUIRED:

ASSESSORS:

**THE HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD
RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET**

SERVICE Assessor	Description of work activity or area of workplace assessed		Name of Assessor:		
			Date Completed:		
AREA Office Areas			Date of Review:		
LOCATION Inverness Office					
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4		STEP 5
List potential hazards here:	List groups of people who are at risk from the hazards you have identified:	List existing controls or note where the information may be found:	Calculate the residual risk taking the presence and effectiveness of control measures into account: Severity X Likelihood = Risk Rating *		List further control measures necessary to reduce risk to an acceptable level <u>AND</u> date of introduction of these measures
			(1 to 3)	(1 to 3)	
Reference:					

NOTE: RISK RATINGS OF 4 OR MORE ARE SIGNIFICANT AND REQUIRE ACTION

Manager signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 4 OBJECT MANUAL HANDLING PLAN

Activity/procedure		
Risk rating		
Equipment needed		
No of handlers required for task / individual requirements		
Method(s) to be used		
Specific instructions for employees		
Remaining problems and further measures required		
Date assessed:	Assessor(s):	Proposed review date:

Note:

Employers are responsible for provision of manual handling training, training in the use of equipment provided by them and reducing the risk of injury to the lowest possible level.

Employees should take responsibility for their own posture and personal safety, and should not compromise the personal safety of their colleagues.

Employees must ensure that they use equipment that has been provided to reduce manual handling