



Manual Handling Risks

What is Manual Handling?

Manual Handling includes any task that requires an individual to move or handle objects by: lifting/lowering/holding, pushing/pulling, or carrying.

What can make Manual Handling hazardous? Actions such as:

- Lifting loads above the shoulder
- Twisting while lifting
- Bending forwards/sideways while lifting
- Sudden jerky movements
- Carrying awkwardly shaped objects
- Lifting/carrying too heavy loads
- Pushing/pulling objects that are difficult to move
- Performing tasks frequently or for long periods of time

Ergonomic Risk Factors:

- Awkward/Static Postures: occur anytime your body is placed outside of its comfortable range of motion.
- Repetitive Motions: the act of performing tasks repeatedly, using the same muscle groups with very little rest or modification.
- Forceful Exertions: occur when your muscles and joints must use force to complete a task.
- Contact Stress: occurs when soft tissue areas of your body come into continuous or repeated contact with hard or sharp objects.

Assessing Manual Handling Risks:

- Load: Is the load heavy, unstable, difficult to grasp, sharp, hot, cold, difficult to grip? Are the contents likely to move or shift?
- Environment: Are there space constraints? Uneven, slippery or unstable floors? Variations in floor levels? Extremely hot, cold or humid conditions? Poor lighting? Poor ventilation? Gusty winds? Clothing or Personal Protective Equipment that restricts movement?
- Operator: Does the individual have any pre-existing musculoskeletal injuries? Are there any physical (height, weight, strength, reach, flexibility) or psychological (stress, overall morale) factors that can play a role? Does the activity involve twisting, stooping, bending, excessive travel, pushing, pulling or precise positioning of the load, sudden movement, inadequate rest or recovery periods, team handling or seated work?