

# Xchanging Safety Sheet

Number 304

## Manual Handling

Manual handling involves a wide range of intermittent and repetitive physical actions.

Intermittent actions		Repetitive actions	
Lifting	Assembling	Packing	Pulling
Carrying	Writing	Using tools	Holding
Pushing	Cleaning	Sorting	Word processing
Throwing		Operating machines and	Equipment

### Legislative Requirements

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 – Manual Handling

### Guidance

Code of Practice for Manual Handling

### What does the law say?

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 – Manual Handling, requires designers, manufacturers, importers, suppliers, employers and employees to ensure that risks associated with musculoskeletal disorders (due to hazardous manual handling at a workplace) are identified and eliminated or, if not possible to eliminate, to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. The OHS Act 2004 requires employers to consult with employees about all hazards in the workplace, including hazardous manual handling.

### Code of Practice for Manual Handling and Assessment Worksheet

The Code of Practice for Manual Handling explains the requirements of the regulations and discusses the processes of hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control. It provides a hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk of musculo-skeletal disorder. WorkSafe also produces a very useful worksheet called “Assessing and Controlling Manual Handling Risk”. Other WorkSafe publications provide advice eg for office workers and handling awkward objects.

### How do manual handling problems occur?

“Hazardous” manual handling is regarded as a leading cause of human suffering, loss of productivity and economic burden within society. Musculoskeletal injuries accounted for over 50% of all work-related compensation claims in Victoria.

Manual handling problems can occur from single accidents, but are usually the result of sustained postures, repetitive movements or the exertion of high forces (forces greater than we normally exert) over time.

Physical injuries that may result include:

- Sprains and strains to soft tissues (nerves, ligaments, tendons and muscles)
- Injury to the back, neck, shoulder, arms, wrists and hands.

Other terms that refer to manual handling problems are:

<b>MSD</b>	Musculoskeletal disorders
<b>OOS</b>	Occupational overuse syndrome
<b>RSI</b>	Repetitive strain injuries.

## Employer Responsibilities

<b>Identify</b>	Manual handling tasks involving high forces, or repetitive or sustained postures
<b>Assess</b>	If these tasks could result in injury, especially if performed for more than 2 hours over a whole shift or 30 minutes continuously
<b>Control</b>	The risk by applying the hierarchy of control
<b>Review</b>	Manual handling controls regularly, eg; every time management and employee representatives audit a workplace.

### Investigating manual handling using a short checklist

Here are some issues to consider that could affect potential hazardous manual handling problems in your organisation. If you answer 'no' to any of these, then further action may be needed.

#### Control the environment

Questions	Yes	No – needs attention
All employees are trained in manual handling requirements		
Workplaces are generally well laid out with good housekeeping		
There are no environmental problems (eg, noise, vibration, lighting)		
Workplace layout allows employees to maintain correct postures		
Flooring, walkways etc are even and not slippery or cluttered		
Clothes (uniforms, gloves etc) do not restrict movement or posture		
The Code of Practice for Manual Handling has been consulted		

#### Control the use of repetitive or sustained tasks

Questions	Yes	No – needs attention
There are no complaints about any discomfort during/ after a task		
There are sufficient staff to meet deadlines and allow for breaks		
There is no excessive forward or sideways bending of the back		
No continuous working with one or both hands above shoulders		
Work tasks do not involve squatting, kneeling, crawling or jumping		
There is no excessive twisting or stretching of body limbs		
The pace of work allows sufficient recovery between movements		
There is no excessive fast pace, especially for long periods of time		
Repetitive tasks involve adequate job design and regular job rotation		
Careful consideration has been given to the risks associated with holding, supporting or restraining an object, person, animal or tool		

#### Control the tasks involving the exertion of high forces

Questions	Yes	No – needs attention
Tasks involving the exertion of high forces have been assessed and appropriate controls implemented		
Employees are encouraged to say if a task is too strenuous		
Employees do not exert excessively high forces during their work		
Safe lifting procedures are followed all the time		
Assistance from others is readily available when needed		
Lifting aids are readily available when needed		

## Review and Revise

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations require employers to review and revise manual handling controls:

- Before objects or systems of work are changed
- When new information about the manual handling task becomes available
- When objects used for purposes other than the purpose for which it was designed
- An occurrence of musculo- skeletal disorder is reported
- A manual handling incident is reported in construction work, a major hazard facility or a mine
- Where the control is inadequate for the risk
- A health and safety representative requests a review.

## Services Available

Xchanging can provide you with the following services:

- Manual handling audit of hazardous manual handling tasks as per the Code of Practice for Manual Handling
- Manual Handling Training (managers, supervisors and staff)
- Develop and implement manual handling policies and procedures.

Please contact the OHS Consultants at [risk.management@au.xchanging.com](mailto:risk.management@au.xchanging.com) for further information.