

# University Occupational Health and Safety Standard

## MANUAL HANDLING

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<b>1. PURPOSE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2. SCOPE</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3. ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4. DEFINITIONS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>5. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and DUTIES</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>6. MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
6.1 Summary of Factors to Consider .....	3
6.2 Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filters.....	4
6.3 HSE Manual Handling Tools .....	4
6.4 Detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessments: Medium to High Risk Tasks .....	4
6.5 Review of Manual Handling Risk Assessments .....	5
6.6 Record retention.....	5
<b>7. TRAINING</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>8. PROCUREMENT OF MANUAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>9. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>10. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>11. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>12. TOOLS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>13. COMPLIANCE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>14. DOCUMENT HISTORY</b> .....	<b>7</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

The University is committed to meeting its legal obligations by ensuring that it has adequate arrangements, facilities and trained personnel to reduce the risk of injury or ill health from manual handling operations.

This Standard sets out the minimum requirements to control risk associated with manual handling activities at the University of Strathclyde in order to comply with relevant legislative obligations and University requirements.

## 2. SCOPE

This document applies to all University staff, postgraduate research students and visiting staff in temporary placements who have managerial, supervisory, or operational manual handling responsibilities.

## 3. ABBREVIATIONS

<b>DSC</b>	Departmental Safety Co-Ordinator
<b>HSE</b>	Health and Safety Executive
<b>MSD</b>	Musculoskeletal Disorder
<b>OHS</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
<b>SHaW</b>	Safety, Health and Wellbeing
<b>SIRIS</b>	Strathclyde Incident Reporting and Investigation System

## 4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Ergonomics** - the process of designing or arranging the workplace, products and systems so that they fit the people who use them.
- 4.2 Load** - a discrete movable object, may be animate or inanimate.
- 4.3 Manual Handling** - covers a wide range of activities involving transporting a load and supporting a load in a static position. Manual handling activities include lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving by the hand or bodily force (direct or indirect) of a human.
- 4.4 Manual Handling Risk Assessor** - someone who is trained in the assessment of manual handling activities, recognises the risks involved, and knows how to eliminate or reduce them.
- 4.5 Musculoskeletal Disorder** - covers any injury, damage or disorder of the joints or other tissues in the upper/lower limbs or the back.
- 4.6 Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filter** – is the basic Manual Handling Risk Assessment that uses guideline weights and conditions to help distinguish low risk manual handling activities from those which may require a detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment.

## 5. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

Specific roles, responsibilities and duties for manual handling are detailed below:

### 5.1 Heads of Department

Responsible for implementing this Standard within their area of responsibility. They will be assisted by their DSC or other nominated person(s). They will:

- ensure that manual handling tasks are identified within the department;
- where reasonably practicable, eliminate all manual handling activities which involves risk of injury to employees;
- where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate manual handling activities, then the HoD must ensure manual handling activities have been assessed appropriately;
- appoint Manual Handling Risk Assessor(s) where necessary, and ensure that they receive appropriate training;
- ensure that risk control measures as identified in the Manual Handling Risk Assessment are implemented effectively, and

- ensure that Manual Handling Risk Assessments are reviewed at appropriate intervals.

## 5.2 Departmental Manual Handling Risk Assessor(s)

Responsible for:

- attending and participate in the appropriate training (see section 7);
- undertaking Manual Handling Risk Assessments within their area of responsibility;
- ensuring Manual Handling Risk Assessments are signed by the personnel carrying out the relevant manual handling operation.

## 5.2 Strathclyde Portering Services

Strathclyde University Portering Services (Estates Services) may be engaged by departments where heavy or large items need to be moved or disposed of. Portering Services Staff will have undergone appropriate training.

## 5.3 All Staff and Post-Graduate Students

All staff and post-graduate students are responsible for taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their activities. They must:

- complete the Manual Handling Awareness online training course;
- complete the Manual Handling and Back Care Awareness course where medium to high risk manual handling tasks are likely to be undertaken;
- inform their line manager of any new activity that requires a Manual Handling Risk Assessment;
- inform their line manager and/or Manual Handling Risk Assessor(s) of any difficulties arising in connection with manual handling activities;
- use specified manual handling equipment/aids and carry out tasks as per the information and instructions given to them;
- report any accident, incident, injury or near miss to their line manager immediately.

## 6. MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT

The following sections provide information on the Manual Handling Risk Assessment process, with reference to Guidance Notes, Information Sheets and Forms made throughout. The HSE issue [Guidance on the Manual Handling Regulations](#) which can be used as a further source of information where required, with the HSE Manual Handling Tools also being referenced within this Standard.

Prior to undertaking a manual handling activity, it is essential to:

- 1) Determine if the manual handling activity can be avoided or eliminated.
- 2) Carry out a suitable and sufficient Manual Handling Risk Assessment if, so far as is reasonably practicable, manual handling cannot be avoided.
- 3) Reduce the risk of injury from manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable.

If the manual handling activity cannot be avoided, a basic set of Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filters should be used in the first instance to determine if a more detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment is required.

Each manual handling activity must be assessed separately taking into account a number of factors (see section 6.1). Refer to the Information Sheet '[Manual Handling Quick Reference Flow Chart](#)' to assist with the risk assessment process.

### 6.1 Summary of Factors to Consider

Manual Handling Risk Assessments should follow an ergonomic approach and consider a number of factors described by 'TILEO'. A summary of these factors can be found in the Information Sheet '[TILEO](#)'.

- **Task** – relating to the type of manual handling activity being carried out.
- **Individual capabilities** – relating to the capabilities of the person carrying out the manual handling activity.

- Load - relating to the type of object being moved.
- Environmental factors – relating to the area in which the object is being moved.
- Other Factors – any other factors that might impact on the manual handling activity.

## 6.2 Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filters

The simple [Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filters](#) should be used to help distinguish low risk manual handling activities from tasks which may require a detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment. Many low risk manual handling activities will generally be the same day to day, week on week where: the loads are known; the tasks do not vary significantly; and the activities are carried out in the same or similar working environment, e.g. handling photocopy paper or files in an office, moving books in libraries or lightweight equipment such as laptops.

Where it is determined that a detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment is not necessary after applying these filters (and using the relevant HSE Manual Handling Tool if necessary), steps should still be taken to reduce all risks associated with the activity to as low a level as is reasonably practicable before carrying out the task.

If the manual handling activity falls outside the guidelines described in the filters a detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment is required and a trained Manual Handling Risk Assessor(s) should be consulted.

This initial assessment may be followed by the use of the HSE Manual Handling Tools (see Section 6.3), to help determine if a full detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment is required.

Where it is clear that the manual handling activity is not low risk, the manual handling assessor can go straight to the completion of the Manual Handling Risk Assessment without using manual handling filters and the HSE's Manual Handling Tools.

## 6.3 HSE Manual Handling Tools

The HSE has produced several tools to help assess the risks from manual handling: the [MAC tool](#) for common risk factors in lifting and lowering, carrying and team operations; the [ART tool](#) for assessing repetitive tasks of the upper limbs; the Variable MAC tool (V-MAC)22 for lifting operations where load weights or handling frequencies vary; and the [RAPP tool](#) for pushing and pulling operations. These tools guide the manual handling risk assessor through a process to identify higher risk manual handling operations. They should be used to assist in determining whether a full detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment is required.

The outcome of the HSE Manual Handling Tool(s) can also be used to inform the detailed full detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment.

## 6.4 Detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessments: Medium to High Risk Tasks

Where the risks from a manual handling activity can't be eliminated or avoided, the trained Manual Handling Risk Assessor(s), in completing a detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment, must first consider the potential to automate or mechanise the process as appropriate, in such cases consideration must be given to procurement of small mechanical manual handling aids (see Section 8).

A detailed Manual Handling Risk Assessment should be carried out if:

- the activity exceeds the guideline figures;
- if the outcome on the HSE tools determine one is required;
- the activities do not come within the guideline (e.g. if lifting and lowering unavoidably takes place beyond the box zones in Figure 1);
- the handling is more frequent than one lift every two minutes;
- the handling involves twisting the torso;
- team handling occurs;
- the operator has reduced capacity (e.g. new and expectant mothers, young persons, recently suffered injury, young workers, workplace layout and organisation);

- the assumptions made in the filter are not applicable, for example when carrying the load it is not held against the body;
- the activity is complex.

#### 6.4.1 Manual Handling Risk Assessment Forms

The University of Strathclyde has two manual handling risk assessment forms which follow the guidance set out in the Manual Handling Regulations: one for lifting and carrying of loads ([Manual Handling Risk Assessment for Lifting and Carrying](#)); and one for pushing and pulling loads ([Manual Handling Risk Assessment for Pushing and Pulling of Loads](#)). The guidance for completing these forms is attained following attendance at the training provided by the University. Only trained Manual Handling Risk Assessors should utilise these forms.

#### 6.4.2 Generic Manual Handling Risk Assessments

Generic Manual Handling Risk Assessments can be used if all types of manual handling activities have been carefully considered and all the relevant risk control measures are incorporated into the generic assessment.

### 6.5 Review of Manual Handling Risk Assessments

Manual Handling Risk Assessments must be reviewed periodically at least annually for medium to high risk activities and at least every 2 years for low risk activities, and also where there is reason to believe the assessment is no longer valid or there is a significant change.

Where an incident has occurred which is related to a manual handling activity, the task must be fully re-assessed before it is carried out again.

### 6.6 Record retention

Manual Handling Risk Assessments should be recorded and the record kept for a period of 5 years following the elimination of the risk.

## 7. TRAINING

The requirement to attend and complete manual handling training courses should be identified as part of the OHS Induction Part 2 or directly by a supervisor/line manager through the course of employment. Training can be booked through the University's online [DAT booking system](#). Training should be completed as soon as possible after a need is identified and **before** any manual handling tasks are undertaken.

### 7.1 Manual Handling On-Line Awareness

This on-line course is **mandatory** for all staff and postgraduate students and is applicable to lower risk manual handling activities e.g. lifting and carrying loads associated with office and administrative work. Further training should be sought for higher risk activities (see section 7.2 and section 7.3).

The full online course must be completed every 3 years, as part of a mandatory re-training process, by all staff and postgraduate students.

### 7.2 Manual Handling and Back Care Awareness (Half Day Course)

This basic manual handling and back care awareness training course incorporates the basic principles of back care and the physical techniques required for the transport or support of a load. Participation on this course is for individuals who are likely to be involved in manual handling tasks that are considered medium to high risk.

This course is **mandatory** for those wishing to become a Manual Handling Risk Assessor, and is a pre-requisite to the Manual Handling Risk Assessors course.

The requirement for re-training should be discussed with line managers every 3 years to take in to account any changes in duties being carried out.

### 7.3 Manual Handling Risk Assessors (One Day Course)

This course is **mandatory** for staff nominated to carry out manual handling risk assessments and provides information on the regulations and a step by step approach to the assessment of risks from manual handling activities. It should be noted that assessors

are not competent to train others in the process of Manual Handling Risk Assessment following this course. Completion of the Manual Handling and Back Care Awareness (half day course) is a pre-requisite to this course.

The requirement for re-training should be discussed with line managers every 3 years to take in to account any changes in duties being carried out.

## **8. PROCUREMENT OF MANUAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT**

If a need for manual handling equipment/aids is determined during the Manual Handling Risk Assessment process consideration should be given to the most appropriate equipment to procure taking into account the TILEO factors.

There are a large number of manufacturers and suppliers providing a wide range of manual handling related equipment. It is advisable to seek guidance on the suitability of new manual handling equipment for the purpose it is intended for from the manufacturers before purchase. In addition, a risk assessment should be carried out when commissioning any new pieces of equipment. Consideration should be given to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and specific regard given to suitability, maintenance and inspection regimes.

A checklist for the selection of small mechanical manual handling aids can be found in the associated [Information Sheet](#).

Manual handling and ergonomic issues should also be identified before giving instructions or approval for redesign/refurbishment of any area or for the procurement of new furniture and equipment.

## **9. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

The occupational health management system is in place to allow staff to raise awareness of health problems and allow intervention to prevent problems being caused or made worse by work activities.

### **9.1 Referral to Occupational Health Services**

Line managers should consult with Human Resources when they wish to [refer](#) a member of staff to the Occupational Health Service. All members of staff are however able to [self-refer](#) if they wish and are encouraged to seek confidential advice before they become ill and absent from work. The Occupational Health Service can also assist in return to work plans following absence due to MSDs.

### **9.2 Physiotherapy**

An onsite early access physiotherapy service is aimed at staff who are on sick leave and/or suffering from MSDs at work. This service is accessible upon referral by an Occupational Health Nurse as part of a return to work rehabilitation plan, or by self-referral upon completing and submitting the referral form which can be found, along with further information on this service, on the [Occupational Health website](#).

## **10. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS**

**10.1** The requirements to meet the standard for manual handling are described in this document. Some aspects are covered in more detail in other documents which are referenced throughout.

**10.2** Written records to be maintained to comply with this standard are manual handling training records and Manual Handling Risk Assessments. Where manual handling equipment is procured records of maintenance and inspection should also be kept where required.

## **11. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING**

**11.1** A copy of the latest Standard will be available on the [SHaW website](#).

**11.2** Departments are expected to report on compliance with this standard as part of regular OHS performance monitoring, further information can be obtained from SHaW.

**11.3** With regard to this Standard, departments must report incidents associated with manual handling activities to the DSC without delay. If appropriate a [SIRIS incident reporting webform](#) must be completed and submitted. If more than one person is involved in an incident then a separate incident reporting webform form should be completed for each individual involved.

Some incidents may be reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). These regulations require that certain work related injuries, cases of ill health and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). SHaW manage the reporting of incidents under RIDDOR.

## 12. TOOLS

Guidance Notes:

- [Manual Handling Risk Assessment Filter](#)

Information sheets:

- [TILEO](#)
- [Manual Handling Quick Reference Flow Chart](#)
- [Checklist for the Selection of Small Mechanical Manual Handling Aids](#)

Forms:

- [Manual Handling Risk Assessment for Pushing and Pulling](#)
- [Manual Handling Risk Assessment for Lifting and Carrying](#)

## 13. COMPLIANCE

This standard aims to meet the requirements of:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Managing for Health and Safety HSG65 (2013)
- USHA Leadership and Management in Health and Safety in Higher Education Institutions (2015)
- USHA Health and Safety Management Profile (HASMAPP) (2015)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

## 14. DOCUMENT HISTORY

A record of changes to this document are maintained in the SHaW Document Control Register.