

Manual Handling
Queen Mary University of London
Health and Safety Policy

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This Health and Safety Policy establishes the framework for manual handling operations by Queen Mary University of London (Queen Mary) staff and students, and also, for others who may be affected by Queen Mary activities. The objective of the Policy is to minimise loss, harm, or damage, enable legal compliance, and promote best practise in manual handling techniques.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Queen Mary will comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended), which place a requirement on the employer and employee to reduce the hazards to health associated with the manual handling of loads.

2.2 Therefore, Queen Mary will, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Avoid manual handling operations wherever possible.
- Assess the risks associated with manual handling activities.
- Reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

2.3 In achieving the above the University will:

- Introduce appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury.
- Provide equipment to enable manual handling activities to be undertaken safely.
- Provide suitable and sufficient supervision, training and information to all staff involved in manual handling operations.

3.0 Purpose

3.1 Manual Handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury in the workplace. This policy and its accompanying guidance is therefore intended to help reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and promote good practice in all lifting, handling and carrying operations at Queen Mary.

4.0 Scope

4.1 This policy applies to all manual handling operations, as defined by the Regulations, under the control of Queen Mary in the UK. Outside of the UK, alternative legislative applies.

5.0 Legislation

5.1 The following legislation is relevant to this Policy: -

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

6.0 Terms and Definitions

6.1 The key definitions contained within the Regulations and guidance include.

- Manual Handling: The transporting or supporting of a load, (including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, and moving) by hand or bodily force.
- Injury: Harm to any part of the body caused by manual handling, injuries include strained muscles, torn ligaments, trapped, compressed or impinged nerves and disc damage (e.g., prolapsed disc).

- Load: a load can be an object, person, or animal. An example of an inanimate moveable object would be packages and boxes.
- Repetitive Task: Any work requiring continuous repetitive movement of the same part of the body to achieve the work requirement.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Specific roles and responsibilities include:

7.2 Heads of Schools, Institutes and Directorates should ensure that:

- Managers are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that manual handling operations under their control are avoided as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Sufficient resources are available for the provision of training in manual handling techniques for staff who have manual handling operations as a significant part of their role.
- Sufficient resources are available to ensure appropriate equipment is provided so the risk of injury from manual handling operations is reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Incidents involving manual handling operations are investigated and reported and any remedial action is implemented, and records maintained.

7.3 Managers and supervisors should ensure that:

- Manual handling operations under their control are avoided so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Where manual handling operations cannot be avoided, appropriate risk assessments are carried out and action taken to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Staff who undertake the manual handling operations are consulted when undertaking the risk assessment
- Where staff have manual handling operations as a significant part of their role, suitable training and information is given in manual handling techniques
- Staff who are undertaking manual handling operations are given general indications, and where practicable, precise information on the weight of each load and the heaviest side of any load whose centre of gravity is not positioned centrally.
- Appropriate time is allocated for manual handling operations to be undertaken.
- Appropriate equipment is provided to ensure that the risk of injury from manual handling operations is reduced as far as is reasonably practicable and staff are trained in the correct use of the equipment (e.g., mechanical aids)
- Records of risk assessments and staff training are maintained.
- Incidents involving manual handling operations are investigated and any remedial action is implemented, and records maintained.
- Pre-employment health screening of staff who have been identified as having manual handling operations as a significant part of their role is undertaken.
- Consider physical capabilities of individuals when allocating manual handling tasks.

7.4 All staff should:

- Avoid manual handling operations by using the equipment provided as instructed and for its intended purpose.
- Be aware of the hazards of non-compliance and their legal responsibility.
- Inform their line manager of any concerns that might reasonably be considered to affect their ability to undertake manual handling operations safely.

- Never manually lift loads which they consider to be too heavy/bulky/unwieldy/unstable/unpredictable or intrinsically harmful to be lifted safely.
- Identify and alert managers to any new activity or equipment that requires risk assessment.
- Document incidents involving manual handling through the Queen Mary accident/incident reporting system and ensure their line manager is informed.
- Inform managers of any broken or faulty equipment.
- Wear clothing and footwear that permits good posture and unrestricted movement.
- Undergo suitable training once the need has been identified.
- Undergo pre-employment health screening if they have been identified as having manual handling operations as a significant part of their role.
- Seek advice from the Occupational Health if they believe they have been injured through a manual handling operation.

7.5 Health & Safety Directorate (HSD) is responsible for:

- The provision of advice and guidance on manual handling tasks and for providing training on manual handling techniques.
- Investigating any manual handling injuries at work that are reported to them.

7.6 Occupational Health is responsible for:

- Undertaking pre-employment health screening of staff who have been identified as having hazardous manual handling operations as a significant part of their role
- Supporting the cases of those who may have been injured through manual handling incidents.

8.0 Policy / Operational Arrangements

8.1 The key operational arrangements include:

8.2 Avoid, eliminate, automate, or mechanise manual handling

8.2.1 The first control measure to consider is whether the manual handling activity can be avoided. This may be achieved by elimination, automation or mechanisation of the task.

8.3 Manual Handling Risk Assessment

8.3.1 The Regulations require that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out when hazardous manual handling is unavoidable.

8.3.2 The aim of the manual handling risk assessment is to make a well-informed decision about the measures necessary to prevent, or adequately control high risk manual handling operations and reduce the risk of injury. It can form part of a more general risk assessment for a specific work task and its complexity should reflect the magnitude of the manual handling risk being assessed. The assessment should follow an ergonomic approach and consider the Task, Individual capabilities; the characteristics of the Load and the work Environment (TILE) associated with the activity. See Appendix 1 for advice on TILE based manual handling risk assessment. Appendix 1 also details two specific HSE assessment tools. Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool and Manual handling assessment charts (the MAC tool).

8.3.3 Manual handling assessments should be carried out by a competent person, recorded and reviewed regularly. The HSD can assist in the risk assessment process if required.

8.3.4 Manual handling risk assessment outcomes should be communicated to the employees undertaking the work. Managers in control of the work must ensure the control measures are implemented and used by their employees. Managers, in conjunction with other competent persons, will monitor the effectiveness of the control measures.

8.3.5 To help risk assessors identify how best to reduce risk, a list of suggested risk reduction measures and controls are given as an aide memoir.

8.3.6 See Appendix 2 for risk assessment manual handling control measures.

8.4 Manual handling aids

8.4.1 Mechanical assistance from the use of handling aids (e.g., sack barrows and trolleys) can help reduce the risk of injury. If the manual handling assessment identifies that a lifting aid is needed, it should be suitable and sufficient for the task and fulfil Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) requirements. Users of aids must be trained, and regular checks of the equipment carried out and recorded.

8.4.2 Reporting of high-risk activities and injuries.

8.4.3 Employees must report high risk manual handling activities to their line manager. If the manual handling activity is perceived to be extremely high risk the employee(s) designated to undertake that activity must NOT proceed and should immediately inform their line manager, or someone with similar authority, to facilitate remedial action.

8.4.4 Employees must report manual handling accidents and incidents to their manager and ensure the incident is recorded on the University incident reporting system as soon as possible.

8.5 Training

8.5.1 The Health and Safety Directorate provide a practical manual handling training course that focuses on manual handling hazards & risks, safe lifting techniques and control measures. It includes an element of practical lifting exercises. This course is booked via the HSD website link.

8.6 Monitor and Review

8.6.1 All manual handling risk assessments should be kept up to date and reviewed if new information comes to light or if there has been a change in the manual handling operations. The assessment should also be reviewed if a reportable injury occurs or when individual employees suffer an illness, injury or the onset of disability which may make them more vulnerable to risk.

8.6.2 The HSD will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by means of inspection, auditing the study of reported incidents and consultation with Occupational Health regarding the number of work-related occupational health referrals. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation / Queen Mary circumstances change.

9.0 Further Information

9.1 Further information sources:

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/2793/contents/made>
- HSE Brief guide to Manual Handling at Work
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

- HSE Manual handling assessment charts <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/>
- HSE Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg478.htm>

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 Assessment approaches

TILE based manual handling risk assessment advice

Assessing manual handling risks

One way to assess manual handling activities is to look at four specific areas – Task, Individual, Load and Environment (easily remembered by the acronym TILE).

Key factors to consider in each element are:

1. The Task 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
- Seated work

2. The Individual Does the individual: -

- Require unusual strength or height for the activity?
- Are they pregnant, disabled or suffering from a health problem?
- Is specialist knowledge or training required?

3. The Load Is the load: -

- Heavy
- Unwieldy,
- Difficult to grasp / grip
- Sharp,
- Hot / cold
- Are the contents likely to move or shift

4. The Environment Are there: -

- Space constraints
- Uneven, slippery, or unstable floors
- Variations in floor levels
- Extremely hot, cold, or humid conditions
- Poor lighting
- Poor ventilation
- Clothing or Personal Protective Equipment that restricts movement

Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool

This tool will help you identify high-risk pushing and pulling operations and check the effectiveness of any risk-reduction measures.

There are two types of pulling and pushing operations you can assess using this tool:

- Moving loads on wheeled equipment, such as hand trolleys, pump trucks, carts or wheelbarrows.
- Moving loads without wheels, which might involve actions such as dragging/sliding, churning (pivoting and rolling) and rolling.

For each type of assessment there is a flow chart, an assessment guide and a score sheet. The flow charts provide an overview of the risk factors and assessment process, while the assessment guides provide information to help you determine the level of risk for each factor.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg478.htm>

Manual handling assessment charts (the MAC tool)

The MAC tool was developed to help the user identify high-risk workplace manual handling activities and can be used to assess the risks posed by lifting, carrying and team manual handling activities.

It is designed to help understand, interpret, and categorise the level of risk of the various known risk factors associated with manual handling activities. It incorporates a numerical and a colour-coding score system to highlight high-risk manual handling tasks.

Using the MAC will help to identify high-risk manual handling activities within the workplace. However, the MAC is not appropriate for all manual handling operations.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/>

10.2 Appendix 2 Risk reduction control measures to consider in manual handling risk assessment

Ways of reducing the risk of injury: -

1. The Task Can you:

- Use a lifting aid
- Improve workplace layout to improve efficiency
- Reduce the amount of twisting and stooping
- Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads
- Reduce carrying distances
- Avoid repetitive handling
- Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used
- Push rather than pull

2. The Individual Can you:

- Pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness
- Take extra care of pregnant workers
- Give staff more information, e.g., about the range of tasks they are likely to face
- Provide more training?

3. The Load Can you make the load:

- Lighter (e.g., Break boxes down)
- Less bulky
- Easier to grasp
- More stable (remove some contents)
- Less damaging to hold

The above may be achieved by asking the supplier of externally sourced goods to help, e.g., provide handles or smaller packages


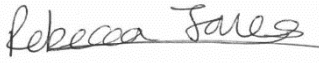
4. The Environment Can you:

- Remove obstructions to free movement
- Provide floors and traffic routes which are in good condition
- Avoid steps and steep ramps
- Prevent extremes of hot or cold
- Improve lighting
- Provide adequate ventilation
- Provide adequate space for the movement of people
- Prevent falling objects or falls from height

5. Other factors (e.g. handling aids and equipment, work organisation) Can you:

- Provide equipment that is more suitable for the task
- Carry out planned preventative maintenance to prevent problems
- Ensure equipment designed to be “wheeled” can move easily
- Provide work clothing and/or PPE which is less restrictive
- Vary tasks to reduce the monotony make workloads and deadlines more achievable
- Encourage good communication and teamwork & involve staff in decisions
- Provide better training and information.

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