

## MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS REGS 1992

**DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS (Regulation 4):** Employers should avoid the need for employees to undertake manual handling which involves a risk of their being injured. The guidance suggests a preliminary assessment, followed by evaluation of whether the task can be eliminated, automated or mechanised. Where employers cannot avoid the need for Manual Handling which involve a risk of injury, they shall –

- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of all such manual handling in accordance with schedule 1. The duty to assess is substantially aligned with that of risk assessment under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. It considers in turn the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability.
- Take steps to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The guidance on this topic likewise addresses in turn the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability, stressing the training alone will not ensure safe handlings. The guidance suggests that the following should be considered when devising a training programme:
  - recognition of potentially hazardous manual handling operations
  - dealing with unfamiliar Manual Handling operations
  - proper use of Manual Handling aids and PPE
  - the interaction of Manual Handling and PPE
  - features of the work environment that contribute to health and safety (e.g. good lighting)
  - importance of good housekeeping
  - factors affecting individual capability
  - good handling technique (e.g. planning a lift, placing feet, good posture, firm grip, smooth movement, moving feet, keeping the load close to the body, placing the load etc)
- Take steps to provide employees with general indications, and, where practicable, precise information on:
  - The weight of each load
  - The heaviest side of any eccentric load. The guidance recommends that loads be marked with their weight or employees provided with general information on the range of loads.

The guidance also points out that manufacturers and packers could have a duty under HASAWA section 6 to mark the weight on packages, and to provide an indication of any eccentric loading. Assessments shall be revised if no longer valid or if there has been significant change in the manual handling operations. The employer shall implement the necessary changes. When determining whether Manual Handling involves a risk of injury and deciding on appropriate steps to reduce the risk, employers shall have regard in particular to –

- The physical suitability of the employee

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- The clothing, footwear or other personal effects he is wearing
- Their knowledge and training
- The results of any risk assessment carried out (see Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999)
- Whether the employee is within a group of employees identified by that assessment as being especially at risk
- The results of any health surveillance (see Regulation 6 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999)

**DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES (Regulation 5):** Employees shall make full use of any system of work provided.

**SELF-EMPLOYED:** Duties on an employer in respect of employees shall also be imposed on the self-employed in respect of themselves (Regulation 2)

Factors to which employers must have regard and questions they must consider when making an assessment of manual handling operations.

### FACTORS

#### 1 The tasks Do they involve:

### QUESTIONS

Holding or moving loads at distance from trunk?  
Unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially: twisting the trunk, stooping, reaching upwards?  
Excessive movement of loads, especially: excessive lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing or pulling distances?  
Is there a risk of sudden movement of loads?  
Frequent or prolonged physical effort required?  
Are there insufficient rest or recovery periods?  
Is a rate of work imposed by a process?

#### 2 The loads are they:

heavy?  
bulky or unwieldy?  
difficult to grasp?  
unstable, or with contents likely to shift?  
sharp, hot or otherwise potentially damaging?

#### 3 The working environment Are there:

Space constraints preventing good posture?  
Uneven, slippery or unstable floors?  
Variations in level of floors or work surfaces?  
Extremes of temperature, humidity or air movement?  
Poor lighting conditions?

#### 4 Individual capability, Does the job:

Require unusual strength, height, etc?  
Create a hazard to those who are pregnant or have a health problem?  
Require special knowledge or training for its safe performance?

#### 5 Other factors Is movement or posture hindered by PPE or by clothing?