

Manual Handling

WHAT IS MANUAL HANDLING?

"...any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or restraining) by hand or bodily force"

- Manual Handling Operating Regulations, 1992.

Activities that involve lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, holding or restraining something can cause manual handling injuries. They are usually strains and sprains to muscles and joints. Broken fingers and toes from dropped loads can also happen when handling loads.

Activities that involve repetitive and forceful movements can also cause manual handling injuries. These commonly affect the hands, arms and shoulders, and are characterised by discomfort or persistent pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues. These injuries are often called Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) or Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). Working in uncomfortable postures for long periods (such as working in a Confined Space) also contributes to these injuries.

HOW IS MANUAL HANDLING APPLIED?

In the workplace, Manual Handling represents more than one third of all injuries that occur. Therefore, it is important for Manual Handling to be monitored and closely applied to ensure that injuries are kept to a minimum.

WorkSafe WA recommends that Manual Handling be identified as a risk factor in any workplace and that three steps be taken to implement safer strategies. Pilbara Iron's own IronSafe Standards have very clear messages in regard to the use of manual handling and the risks involved.

1. Hazard Identification
2. Risk Assessment
3. Risk Control

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

In terms of Pilbara Iron, this exercise is performed using the Take and the JHA's. Any problems raised here with manual handling will be dealt with.



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Data Source:

1. WorkSafe WA – Safetyline
2. NIOSH – USA
3. Health & Safety Executive: UK

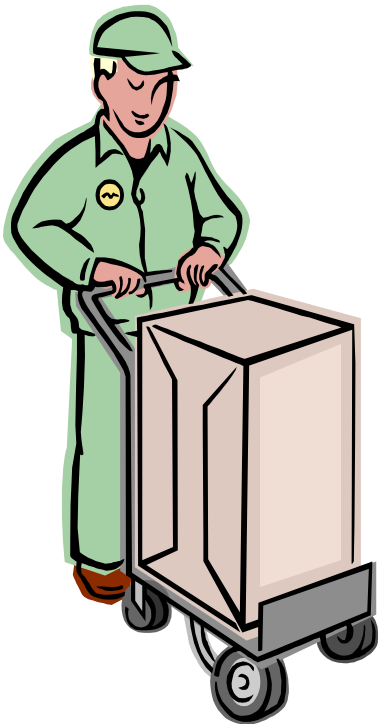
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RISK ASSESSMENT

Decide which hazards have been identified as the most likely to occur and identify ways that you can reduce the chance of injuries occurring.

RISK CONTROL

This involves the redesigning of the job area to make it safer for people to work. Controls can vary from modifying the workplace and providing mechanical equipment to extra training and technique instruction.



WHAT ARE MY LIMITS?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the USA has determined a loose set of guidelines that should help determine safe lifting limits for people involved in manual handling.

Their guidelines are summarised as follows:

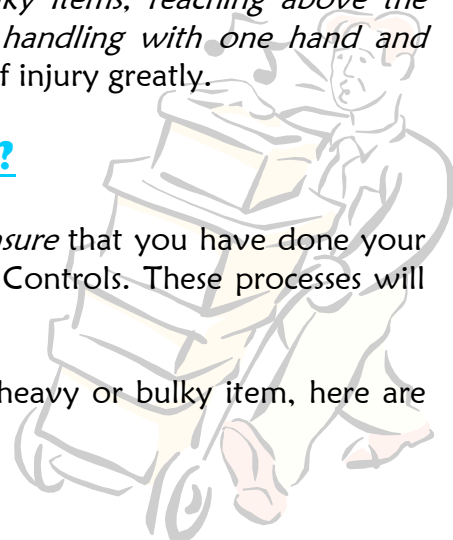
Manual Handling	Weight Guide	
	Male	Female
Seated	4.5kg	4.5kg
Standing (no risk factors)	16-55kg	16-55kg

It is especially important to note that *twisting, bending forwards or backwards, bulky items, reaching above the head or below the thighs, handling with one hand and carrying for long distances* will increase the risk of injury greatly.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

When faced with any Manual Handling task, *ensure* that you have done your Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Controls. These processes will assist in reducing the chance of an injury.

If there comes a time when you need to lift a heavy or bulky item, here are some tips that will help you avoid injury:



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- Use a trolley or mechanical equipment instead of picking up the object
- Seek help from fellow workmates to lighten the load
- Use handles where possible
- Lift with your legs, keeping your back as straight as possible
- Hold the item as close to your chest as you can
- Try not to carry the load over a long distance
- Take note of warnings that may be printed on the items themselves

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1. WorkSafe WA – Safetyline
2. NIOSH – USA
3. Health & Safety Executive: UK