

Safety

Manual Handling and Personal Protective Equipment

A guide to safe practices



Think first, lift afterwards

Whenever you're about to move something heavy at work, applying a little thought beforehand can help you avoid unnecessary injury.

Whether you are one of the 10 million people whose job involves regularly lifting and moving things, or you only occasionally need to, these guidelines are for you. To help you approach lifting and carrying safely, we have drawn upon our own experience and from the guidance in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

Assess the load. Read any labels or instructions and be sure you understand them. Does a box have contents that may move when you lift? This could change the balance of the load and catch you off guard.

Do not rush to move a load. Plan. Where are you going? A long way, or a short distance? Upstairs? Would two easy journeys be better than a single risky one? Perhaps you need help from another person, equipment, or a trolley?

Always ask for help if you need it

- Make sure that there is room to put the load down safely without danger to your fingers or toes, and be certain that it is safe where you have put it
- If you are putting the load on a bench or table, set it down on the edge and then push it forward; do not stretch over the table with it
- If you are raising the load above head height, you may need help
- Your arm muscles will be weak in this position and it is also harder to balance.

Lifting as a team

Whenever a load is too heavy, awkward or out of reach for one person, two or more people should handle it as a team. Team lifting requires organisation:

- Each person should be approximately the same height and strength
- One person must be responsible for giving signals and instructions so that the team works as a unit
- Start by reminding everyone how important it is to lift and lower together and not to change grip without warning the others
- Then apply all the same basic techniques for individual lifting and carrying.

Working with equipment

Some loads should not be moved by hand. Use the appropriate equipment only if you have had the necessary training. Otherwise, obtain the assistance of a trained operator.

Carrying and handling

- Try not to twist your body, it makes it harder for you to carry and balance
- When you want to change direction, or move the load around, move your feet so that you turn your whole body
- Make sure you can see clearly over the load and do not change your grip unless the weight is supported
- To lower the load follow the same rules for lifting – bend your knees, keeping your back straight, chin in, elbows in, heels on the ground, with the load close to your body.

The environment

Your health and fitness can affect your ability to lift and carry loads safely. For example, if you have a spine problem, arthritis, lung disease or are pregnant, you need to take extra care. Pregnancies can be at risk from lifting heavy loads or repeated manual work.

If lifting is a major part of your job remember that you might need time to adjust returning to work after a holiday or sickness. It can be a mistake to assume you can pick up where you left off! The same is true if you are starting new work and handling different types of loads in unfamiliar locations. In each case, take care to acquire the confidence to lift and carry without endangering yourself or others. The weight of all loads can be deceptive, and whatever your health or fitness, treat every load with care. Ask for training or instruction whenever you are unsure.

Everyday, someone is injured in the workplace because they do not take precautions when undertaking a physical task.

Lifting on your own

- Get a firm grip. Use your whole hand not just your fingers
- Lift steadily, not in a jerky movement
- Straighten knees as you stand, keeping your back straight – this helps your leg muscles, which are the strongest, take the bulk of the weight
- Hold the load closely, and tuck your arms and elbows in against your body
- Keep your heels on the ground. Make sure the load is not too heavy or awkward to balance.
- Position yourself to lift the load with your body facing the direction in which you intend to carry it
- If the load is an uneven shape, make sure that the heaviest part is closest to your body, so that if the weight shifts it will move towards you
- Stand close to the load, with one foot in front of it and the other to one side
- Bend your knees, do not stoop
- Keep your back straight, not necessarily upright but straight, while tucking your chin in.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment or clothing that will help protect you from risk of injury, particularly when you are working in a manufacturing / industrial environment. It is important for your safety, so before starting work always check you have been issued with the correct PPE and use it at all times.

Your PPE safety checklist

The checklist will highlight the ways that PPE can make your work safer and protect you from other work taking place around you:

- Wear safety footwear to protect your feet against dropped loads
- Use gloves to avoid cuts and hot or 'cold' burns
- Wear eye protection when you are working with molten materials and during welding operations, or when you are near machines that can send out flying particles. You should also wear eye protection to avoid chemical splashes when pouring liquids
- Wear ear defenders where loud or sudden noises might distract or startle you, or where consistent level of noise might affect your hearing
- Wear nose and mouth protection where dust and fumes might be a hazard
- Wear a safety helmet when people are working overhead, or when you are in an area with restricted headroom
- Keep your PPE in a clean and serviceable condition
- Make sure you know how to use it.

Manpower and your Health and Safety

Manpower accepts its obligations as an employer, including those stipulated by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. We ensure that our assigned staff are aware of all Health and Safety issues relevant to each assignment. Manpower is committed to equal opportunities.

Individual responsibilities in this area are set out in our Employee Handbook, issued to every member of staff when they start working for Manpower.

If you have any queries please raise them with your Consultant or your local Manpower branch.

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