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**Manual Handling Policy**

Under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR), manual handling is interpreted as the transporting or supporting of any load, which also includes a person or an animal.

Regulation 4 of MHOR requires the employer to avoid the need for hazardous manual handling activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to eliminate hazardous manual handling, an assessment must be undertaken to determine the level of risk.

Suitable controls must then be introduced to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest extent reasonably practicable. This may be achieved by the use of automation, mechanical aids or redesigning the system of work or even the workplace itself.

An assessment should take into consideration the task, the load, the individual, the environment and any other factors which may affect safe lifting and carrying (for example the use of personal protective equipment).

Assessments should be reviewed when there is a significant change in:

(a) The activity or process

(b) The working environment

(c) The numbers or abilities of personnel

(d) The nature of the load(s) to be handled.

Reassessment may also be required where accident/absence statistics show that the original control measures were not sufficiently effective.

**General Statement**

Statistics show that manual handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury at the workplace. More than one third of lost time accidents are caused in this way. These injuries may often have long-term effects. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and to provide guidance on the measures that should be taken to ensure safe lifting and carrying at the workplace. The persons with the responsibility for implementing the provisions of this policy are the Directors of the Company.

**Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers**

The company will ensure that operations which involve manual handling are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Measures to achieve this include ergonomic design of the workplace and activity and the provision of automated or mechanical aids such as trolleys, chutes and conveyors.

An assessment of manual handling activities will be carried out by a competent person. Risks which are identified will be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The following factors will be considered during the assessment:

**The Task**

Bending and stooping to lift a load significantly increases the risk of back injury. Items should ideally be lifted from no lower than knee height to no higher than shoulder height. Outside this range, lifting capacity is reduced and the risk of injury is increased. Where items are required to be lifted from above shoulder height, a stand or suitable means of access should be used. Items which are pushed or pulled should be as near to waist level as possible. Pushing is preferable particularly where the back can rest against a fixed object to give leverage.

Carrying distances should be minimised, especially if the task is regularly repeated. Repetitive tasks should be avoided wherever possible. Tasks which involve lifting and carrying should be designed in such a way as to allow for sufficient rest breaks to avoid fatigue. Avoid tasks which require twisting the body wherever possible.

**The Load**

The load should be kept as near as possible to the body trunk to reduce strain and should not be of such size as to obscure vision. An indication of the weight of the load and the centre of gravity should be provided where appropriate.

Unstable loads should be handled with particular caution. The change in centre of gravity is likely to result in overbalancing. Ensure that there is a secure handhold, using gloves where necessary to protect against sharp edges or splinters.

**The Individual**

Consideration must be given to age, body weight and physical fitness. Regard must be given to personal limitation; employees must not attempt to handle loads which are beyond their individual capability. Assistance must be sought where this is necessary.

Persons with genuine physical or clinical reasons for avoiding lifting should be made allowance for, as should pregnant women, who should not be required to undertake hazardous lifting or carrying tasks.

Sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work is an important factor in reducing the risk of injury. Individuals undertaking lifting or carrying will be given suitable instruction, training and information to undertake the task with minimum risk.

**The Working Environment**

There must be adequate space to enable the activity to be conducted in safety and the transportation route must be free from obstruction. Lighting, heating and weather conditions must be taken into account.

Floors and other working surfaces must be in a safe condition, and adequate ventilation is required, particularly where there is no natural ventilation.

**Other Factors**

Use of personal protective equipment may be necessary whilst carrying out manual handling activities. If the use of PPE restricts safe and easy movement, this should be reported. Constant interruptions from other workers must be avoided, as this can reduce the concentration of an individual.

**Duties of Managers and Supervisors**

Managers or supervisors must ensure that:

(a) Manual handling assessments are carried out where relevant and records are kept.

(b) Employees are properly supervised.

(c) Adequate information and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities.

(d) Any injuries or incidents relating to manual handling are investigated, with remedial action taken.

(e) Employees adhere to safe systems of work;

(f) Safety arrangements for manual handling operations are regularly monitored and reviewed.

(g) Employees undertaking manual handling activities are suitably screened for reasons of health and safety, before undertaking the work.

(h) Special arrangements are made, where necessary, for individuals with health conditions which could be adversely affected by manual handling operations.

**Duties of Employees**

Employees must ensure that:

(a) They report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may be detrimentally affected by the manual handling activity

(b) They comply with instruction and training which is provided in safe manual handling activities

(c) Their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out manual handling activities

(d) They use equipment which has been provided to minimise manual handling activities

(e) Any problems relating to the activity are reported to a responsible person.

**Information and Training**

Suitable information and training will be provided to persons who are required to carry out manual handling activities.

Training needs will be identified and reviewed by a responsible person. Refresher training will also be given at reasonable intervals.

Employees will be informed of approximate weights of loads which are handled and objects which have eccentric weight distribution.

**Safe System of Work**

Poor lifting and carrying techniques can result in discomfort and increase the risk of injury. In extreme circumstances, these injuries can have permanent effects. Adopting the following simple precautions can reduce these risks:

1. Ensure that formalised systems of work which have been designed for the work activity are complied with.

2. Make full and proper use of aids to lifting and carrying, such as trolleys, chutes and access equipment.

3. Store heavy items between shoulder and hip height. Where possible only store small, light items above shoulder or below knee height.

4. Use the legs and knees to bend and lift — do not stoop or bend the back.

5. Avoid tasks which require stretching or twisting.

6. Ensure that regular rest breaks are taken where manual handling activities are repetitive or to prevent the onset of fatigue.

7. Ensure that there are no sharp, hot or cold edges which could cause injury.

8. Ensure that walkways are free from obstructions.

9. Make full and proper use of personal protective equipment.

10. Report any problems or concerns associated with manual handling operations to a responsible person without delay.

**Record Keeping**

The Company shall record any assessments made, which have identified a significant risk of injury. These will be maintained in an easily retrievable format.

These records will as a minimum identify the following.

1. Location/department.
2. Activity under assessment.
3. Description of activity/present system of work.
4. Numbers and groups of employees involved.
5. Groups or individual employees identified as being at higher risk.
6. Significant risks identified from assessment.
7. Existence and effectiveness of existing control measures.
8. Any further controls which are required.
9. Name of assessor(s).
10. Date of assessment.

Assessments of low risk activities, which can be very quickly and easily repeated, may not be formally recorded.

The Company shall also retain records of training provided to employees.