

## MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

**Policy Statement:** McSence Group recognizes that more than a quarter of all workplace accidents reported to the enforcing authorities are related to manual handling, the majority of which result in more than three days off work. In 1996-97, almost 10% of the reported major injuries were due to manual handling. Approximately 50% of those were injuries to the back and lower back. The rest were due to strains, hernias, fractures, abrasions, cuts etc. Some of the injuries were cumulative and not caused by any single accident. Poor manual handling invariably leads to these types of muscular-skeletal disorders, but many of these injuries can be caused by different work-related factors, such as use of vibrating tools, or repetitive movements over a long period of time. The problems associated with manual handling are not confined to a few industries but affect most workplaces, including construction, retail and wholesale distribution.

**All Employees:** This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies which includes the subsidiary companies - *McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd* in any capacity including but not limited to:

- ✚ All employees at all levels, prospective employees, agency workers, seconded workers, temporary workers, contractors/sub-contractors, clients, agents, external consultants, volunteers, members of the public, group's supply chain, third-party representatives and/or business partners who will be referred to in our Group policies as "all employees".

**The Workplace:** This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies in any capacity at the workplace(s) as defined below which includes but not limited to:

- ✚ McSence Premises, Offices, Units, Business Park, Client's Premises, External Meeting Places, Customers' Homes, Gardens, Sheltered Housing, Whilst On-Call, On-Duty, Emergency Cover, Working from Home including On-Line Meetings, Whilst Driving in Company Time, Working Public Areas (café's, trains, coffee shops, buses etc) and will be referred to throughout this policy as "the workplace".

**Purpose:** The McSence Group's aim is, wherever practicable, to reduce the need for manual handling in the workplace, either by eliminating such tasks, or by use of work equipment such as conveyors, or fork-lift trucks. Where it is not practicable, there is a requirement to assess the manual-handling activity in detail. The modern and scientifically acceptable approach to manual handling is to take an ergonomic perspective, i.e., 'fitting the job to the person', rather than 'fitting the person to the job'. This Guide covers manual handling in the widest sense, not just lifting and carrying, and focuses on tasks, loads, the working environment, and the people doing the manual handling. The following definitions related to manual handling:

- ✚ **Ergonomics:** The study of the relationship between workers and their environment.

- ✚ **Injury:** This includes damage to any part of the body, not just the back or limbs. Injury caused by the chemical properties (e.g., corrosiveness or carcinogenicity) of the load would not be dealt with under this heading, but by means of controlling substances hazardous to health.

- ✚ **Load:** A discrete moveable object. It does not include work equipment (such as a chainsaw) being used for the purpose intended, but it might include live animals or human beings.

- ✚ **Manual Handling Operations:** The physical handling of loads by a human being without the assistance of equipment such as a fork-lift truck, etc. This is not necessarily by lifting but could include pushing or pulling or maneuvering in a physical manner. These operations involve any transport or support of a load, including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving of a load by hand or by body force. This includes pulling on a rope or lever, as well as directly handling the load, and the intentional dropping or throwing of a load, whether into a receptacle or from one person to another. However, operating the starting handle of a vehicle or pulling on a rope to secure the load on a vehicle is not manual handling. The HSE's guidance does not fully explain the distinction drawn by these examples.

- ✚ **Reasonably Practicable:** It must be shown that the cost of any further preventive steps would be grossly disproportionate to the further benefit that would accrue from their introduction.

**Legislation:** The 'Manual handling operations regulations 1992' came into force on 1 January 1993, implementing Directive 90/269/EEC throughout Great Britain. They should be considered alongside the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999', which require an employer to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the health and safety issues in the workplace that may affect employees whilst they are at work. Where an assessment indicates there is a possibility of risk from the manual handling of loads, the 'Manual Handling Operations Regulations' are applicable. The Regulations do not apply on sea-going ships where manual handling is being carried out by ships' crew under the authority of a Master. They do apply on ships where work is carried out by shore-based contractors, provided the ship is in British territorial waters. They also apply on offshore installations (oil and gas rigs, and their support vessels) falling under British jurisdiction.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

**Responsibilities of Employer:** The 'Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992' place these duties on employers:

- ✚ Avoid hazardous manual handling operations where possible.
- ✚ Assess any unavoidable hazardous operations.
- ✚ Remove or control risk of injury, using an assessment as a basis for action.

**Responsibilities of Self-Employed:** Self-employed persons are responsible for their own safety during manual handling and the duties placed on employers apply to all self-employed persons.

**Responsibilities of Employee:** Every employee must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. They must co-operate with their employers and make full and proper use of any system of work provided by the employer. This confirms the more general requirements to be found in the 'Health and Safety at Work Act' and the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999'.

### **Importance of Correct Manual Handling:**

**Accident Statistics:** Approximately 35% of the injuries notified to the enforcing authorities since 1991 have been caused by poor manual-handling techniques, and of these, 50% caused injury to the backs of the affected people. HSE research suggests that approximately 5.5 million working days were lost to these types of injury in the UK, of which 3.6 million were as a result of back injuries at work. They occur in all types of work, not just industrial workplaces, and not only when lifting heavy weights. Although manual-handling injuries are rarely fatal, they do tend to cause permanent disability. Some of these are injuries caused by the cumulative effect of poor manual-handling techniques over a period of time, rather than in one incident. It is therefore essential that poor practices are corrected as soon as possible.

**Types of injury:** These are some of the more common types of injuries which can arise from incorrect manual handling:

- ✚ **Disc injuries:** Almost 90% of back problems are caused by disc lesions. When in an upright position, the back is able to withstand considerable stress directly through the length of the spine, but when the back is bent, the stress is concentrated on one point of the spine. Continued pressure on a particular point can 'pinch' the intervertebral disc between the vertebrae. This effect can cause wear, which in turn can lead to a rupture when the disc is under pressure.
- ✚ **Hernias:** When the body is in a bent position, the risk of a hernia is increased. The abdominal cavity shrinks in size, compressing internal organs, which may cause them to be forced through a gap in the abdomen wall.
- ✚ **Cuts, abrasions and fractures:** These occur for a variety of reasons, including failing to check for sharp edges or nails when picking a load up, or from tripping over objects left lying around when carrying something, and not wearing the correct protective clothing.

**Prevention:** The HSE Guidance on the 'Manual Handling Regulations' details a hierarchy of measures which should be used when managing such tasks where the employer's duty in positive manual handling is determined by a cost-benefit analysis, whereby the pros and cons of implementing additional preventive steps are balanced against costs, examples are:

**Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as it is reasonably practicable and the first questions to be asked are:**

- ✚ Can the movement of the loads be eliminated completely?

- ✚ Can the task be completed in a manner which doesn't require the load to move?

**Assess** any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided.

The 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations' require that general workplace assessments are undertaken. If the assessment indicates that injury from manual handling operations may occur, the Regulations oblige employers to assess any hazardous tasks in greater detail.

**Reduce** the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable using the information obtained during the assessment.

**Can the task be automated** by considering the types of manual handling equipment available? When mechanizing the operation, remember to assess the additional hazards that it may introduce and address these as well. For instance, forklift truck drivers must be effectively trained, warning signs put in place, etc.

**Assessment Planning & Pre-planning:** First, decide who should perform the assessment. This could be the employer, or anyone to whom they delegate the task, or a team of people whose combined experience is likely to lead to a satisfactory solution. If there is not sufficient knowledge in-house to undertake the assessment, it may be necessary to hire outside help. This does not absolve the employer from their legal responsibility for the assessment or from the management of any identified risks. When identifying problems and practical solutions, the opinions of employees may be particularly useful, and such contributions should be actively encouraged by employers. It should be undertaken by a competent person who has sufficient knowledge and experience to be able to make sensible decisions; this person should have an understanding of:

- ✚ The requirements of the Regulations
- ✚ The nature of the handling operation
- ✚ Basic human capabilities
- ✚ Identification of high-risk activities
- ✚ Practical steps to reduce risk

**General Assessments:** Assessments require careful planning to ensure they are suitable and sufficient. The initial, general assessments will identify a number of manual-handling operations requiring more detailed assessment. In larger businesses this can appear to be a daunting task in itself. The first step is to break the numbers down into manageable chunks, for example:

- ✚ Determine if there are generic operations performed across the company; if there are, this will reduce the number of assessments.
- ✚ Use the 'numerical guidelines for assessment' detailed in HSE 'Manual Handling Operations Guidance on Regulations' to decide if the task should be included in an assessment, and at what level of risk. These guidelines are not meant to be used as the limit of an individual's capability, but as guidance toward prioritising more detailed assessments.
- ✚ Identify the level of risk of each task and start by assessing those in the highest risk category.

**Carrying Out the Assessment:** The regulations require employers to consider a number of factors when undertaking an assessment. These factors lead to a number of further questions being asked and it is therefore useful to use a checklist when making the assessment to include the following factors:

- ✚ The task
- ✚ The load
- ✚ The working environment
- ✚ The individual capability
- ✚ The impact of protective clothing and equipment

**Progress:** Ensuring that the operation under assessment is in progress seems rather too obvious to mention, however, there are many occasions when this small but important piece of planning has been forgotten. It is also important to have the people who normally perform the operation undertake it during the assessment. Tell staff the reason for the assessment, being carried out, so as to encourage their full co-operation. Make sure that staff are aware that a 'no blame culture' prevails, so that the assessment is of the actual operation - not a staged performance for the benefit of the management. Staff should be made aware of the outcome of any assessment.

**Task Assessment:** The objective of the assessment is to identify the hazards to health and safety posed by the manual handling task. There may be specific considerations to be made for the type of industry or organisation in which the assessment is being carried out and these should be identified prior to the assessment taking place, if possible. Some of the points to look for are outlined below:

- ✦ **Posture Whilst Carrying or Lifting A Load:** Correct posture whilst lifting or carrying is essential. The risk of incurring injury is greatly increased when the correct balance with well-placed feet and hands is not executed.
- ✦ **Holding Load Away from Torso:** Loads lifted away from the torso increase the stress on the back approximately fivefold.
- ✦ **Twisting, Stooping, Reaching Upward, Up and Down Motions Etc:** Any of the above movements, either individually or in combination, will significantly increase the stress on the back, and should be avoided.
- ✦ **Unpredictable or Unbalanced Loads:** Loads which are not entirely secure or are difficult to balance create a risk to the handler, which is compounded when posture is incorrect.
- ✦ **Repetitive & Prolonged Strenuous Physical Effort:** Repetition and prolonged strenuous physical effort can cause injuries, some of which do not become apparent immediately, but build up over months or years.
- ✦ **Breaks:** To minimise the risks, breaks should be taken to enable the body time to recoup.
- ✦ **The Load:** Several factors must be taken into account when assessing the load. Often the weight of a load is considered, but other factors are neglected, such as: shape, centre of gravity, ease of grip, moving or shifting contents, wet/slippery, sharp, hot/cold, etc. It is essential that the operator checks all the possibilities before handling the load.
- ✦ **The Environment:** The potential hazards within the immediate area where the load is to be moved should be considered and these may include:
  - Floor conditions - are they slippery, uneven, unstable or stepped?
  - Atmospheric conditions- is it windy, humid, hot etc?
  - Poor lighting or ventilation.
  - Area congestion.
  - Space constraints - is there adequate space to enable workers to adopt a good posture?
- ✦ **Individual capability:** Individual capability affects the ability to undertake certain tasks and everyone should be looked at any difficulties they may have and factors that should be considered include whether they are:
  - Under 18 years old.
  - Over 50 years old.
  - Fitness.
  - Disabilities.
  - Complexity of the task.
  - Pregnant or have recently given birth.
  - Medical problems that could affect their manual-handling capability, such as back or knee problem.

**Reducing the Risk of Injury:** An ergonomic approach should be taken toward implementing remedial actions. Each of the following areas need to be considered.

- ✦ **Mechanical Assistance:** Handling aids enable bodily forces to be applied more efficiently. Examples include levers, hoists, trolleys, conveyors and chutes.
- ✦ **Involve the Workforce:** Communication between management and employees is important - operators are in the best position to identify faults and suggest remedies.
- ✦ **Improve the Task Layout:** The need for maintaining fixed postures should be minimised, as should the frequency of handling load, particularly heavy or awkward ones. Where possible, staff should be allowed to self-pace their work, as voluntary rest breaks are often more effective than set breaks.
- ✦ **Team Handling:** To reduce the risks of handling loads which are awkward or dangerous for one person, consideration should be given to using teams of two or more persons in such situations, adequate space for manoeuvring and access should be provided. There should either be adequate grasps, or a handling aid should be used ideally, team members should be of similar build, stature and physical capability.
- ✦ **Personal Protective Equipment:** The nature of the load or the environment may require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, overalls or safety footwear PPE should fit well and not interfere with any handling operations for example, gloves should not interfere with manual dexterity and footwear should have non-slip soles.
- ✦ **Maintenance:** All equipment (PPE and manual handling aids) should be maintained, and a system should be in place for reporting and repairing defective equipment.
- ✦ **Altering the load:** Reducing the weight of loads by packing in smaller containers can reduce the risk of injury from manual handling. However, this may result in increased frequency of handling, which may lead to increased risk of fatigue.



- ✦ **Loads:** Where possible, loads should be made less bulky and the centre of gravity brought closer to the operator's body. To make loads easier to grasp, handles, hand grips, etc may be provided or they may be placed in containers which are easier to hold. Consideration should be given to the positioning of grasps on containers. Loads should be stable and free from oil, dust, etc.
- ✦ **Working Environment:** Adequate space should be provided to allow manoeuvrability and floors should be flat, well maintained and adequately drained. Spillages should be promptly cleared. Manual handling should, where possible, be undertaken on a single level, and work surfaces should be of the same height to reduce the need for lowering or raising loads. A comfortable working environment should be maintained, with consideration given to temperature, humidity, ventilation and lighting.

**Information & Training:** The provision of information and training plays an important part in reducing the risk of manual handling injury, but the main objective is to design the manual handling operation correctly and training programmes should address the following issues:

- ✦ How to avoid the hazard
- ✦ How to address unavoidable/unfamiliar handling tasks
- ✦ How to correctly use handling aid
- ✦ How to correctly use PPE
- ✦ Features of the working environment that aid safety
- ✦ The importance of housekeeping
- ✦ Issues which affect individual capability
- ✦ Good handling techniques

**Manual Handling Techniques & Good Handling Techniques:** In addition to other risk control measures, good handling techniques play an important role in reducing the risk of injury from manual-handling operations. When lifting a load, the following steps should be taken:

- ✦ **Stop and Think:** consideration should be given as to where the load is to be carried, whether assistance is required, etc.
- ✦ **Place Feet:** the handler should place his feet apart, to provide a balanced, stable base.
- ✦ **Adopt A Good Posture:** the knees should be bent so that when gripping the load, the hands are approximately level with the waist, keep the back straight, the shoulders level and face the same direction as the hips.
- ✦ **Get A Firm Grip:** the arms should be kept within the boundary of the legs.
- ✦ **Don't Jerk:** lifting movements should be smooth.
- ✦ **Moving Feet:** when turning, the trunk should not be twisted.
- ✦ **Keep Close to The Load:** the load should be kept close to the body with the heaviest side next to the trunk.
- ✦ **Put Down & Adjust:** the load should be positioned precisely after it has been placed down.

**Poor Manual Handling Operations:** There are many poor handling techniques, but these are the most common. Insufficient training, or lack of appropriate information may also add to the toll and there is a 'top ten' of poor handling techniques:

1. Holding the load away from the body puts excessive stress on the arms and neck.
2. Stooping focuses the stress to a specific area of the back, rather than allowing the whole body to take the strain.
3. Reaching upwards.
4. Excessive up and down movements.
5. Carrying loads over long distances, rather than using mechanical devices.
6. Strenuous pushing or pulling.
7. Unpredictable or unbalanced loads.
8. Repetitive handling and lifting.
9. The work rate is too strenuous.
10. Too few breaks.

**Records & Review:** Assessments should be reviewed when there are significant changes in the operation, or at set periods, and when new personnel are to undertake the task. When the assessment is complete, and the remedial measures are in place, employers must inform employees of safe working methods and the following issues should be checked:

- ✦ Have all staff received manual handling training?

- ✚ Have changes in operating procedures suggested that other types of training are necessary?
- ✚ If a new safe working method has been written, have the affected staff been trained in the new procedures?

The significant findings of an assessment should be recorded and retained in an easily accessible form. Legislation does not require written records to be kept when:

- ✚ The assessment can be easily repeated and explained at any time because it is obvious.
- ✚ The operations are low risk, simple in style and short lived.

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**Company Intranet – Staff Zone:** All the McSence Groups policies, procedures, handbooks are available on-line to all employees on the McSence Group’s Staff Zone Intranet via our website [Login | McSence](#)

**Compliance:** Failure to comply with the provisions of this Policy may result in Disciplinary proceedings.



*McSence Group Signatory:*

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*Policy Amendments & Revisions: This policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or organisational changes. Improvements will be made by learning from experience and the use of an established annual review. Should any amendments, revisions, or updates be made to this policy it is the responsibility of the Company Senior Management Team (SMT) to see that all relevant employees receive notice and training if necessary.*