

Safe Manual Handling for the Self-employed

More than a third of all over three-day injuries reported to the HSE and Local Authorities arise from manual handling activities.

Risk of injuries resulting from handling activities can be classified under three main categories: over-exertion; cumulative damage and accidental injury. Injuries can range from disc prolapse; muscle strain; falls; repetitive strain; cuts and crushes.

Self-employed people may find themselves more at risk due to the fact that in many cases they work on their own in situations where there is little chance of assistance from other people.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

These Regulations place duties on both the employer and the self employed with regard to the assessment of manual handling activities within the workplace, if the risk cannot be avoided.

The Duties of the Self-employed under these Regulations

Self-employed persons should, wherever possible, avoid the need to undertake manual handling operations at work thereby eliminating the risk of injury.

Where it is not possible or practical to avoid manual handling, then they are required to assess manual handling activities by looking at the following factors: Load, Individual, Task and Environment.

The Load - size; weight, shape; centre of gravity; physical hazards such as sharp edges; temperature; chemical hazards such as dangers of spillage which may dictate the use of personal protective equipment.

Individual: Physical characteristics such as capabilities; height; size; gender; pregnancy; training; knowledge.

The Task: Mechanisation; working height and posture; frequency; duration.

The Environment: space and layout; working surface height; floor area; temperature; light; noise; vibration; weather.

Assessment of Manual Handling Activities

When carrying out an assessment of the risks to health during manual handling, you should consider the following factors:

The Loads

Are they:

- Heavy?
- Bulky or unwieldy?
- Difficult to grasp?
- Unstable, or with contents likely to shift?



Call us now on free phone **08081 686868**

Visit us at **WWW.CONSTRUCTAQUOTE.COM™**

- Sharp, hot or otherwise potentially damaging?

Individual Capability

Does the job:

- Require unusual strength or height?
- Create a hazard to those who might reasonably be considered to be pregnant or to have a health problem?
- Require special information or training e.g. kinetic handling - so as to ensure safe individual performance?

The Tasks:

Do they involve:

- Holding or manipulating loads at distance from trunk?
- Unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially twisting the trunk, stooping, reaching upwards or downwards?
- Excessive movement of loads, especially excessive lifting or lowering distances: excessive carrying distances?
- Excessive pushing or pulling of loads?
- Risk of sudden movement of loads?
- Frequent or prolonged physical effort?
- Insufficient rest or recovery periods?

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 or humidity?
- Conditions causing ventilation problems or gusts of wind?
- Poor lighting conditions?

Key Action Steps

- Consider avoiding the need for manual handling by using mechanical aids such as sack - barrows, trolleys, hoists, lift trucks etc. But remember, that specialist training is required to operate items such as lift trucks.
- Consider reducing the risk by minimising or reducing the load/task. Can the load be split into smaller packages?
- Consult with your Client/Customer to assess the conditions on site. Enquire if any assistance in the form of mechanical aids or personal assistance is available.



Call us now on free phone **08081 686868**
Visit us at **WWW.CONSTRUCTAQUOTE.COM™**

- Conduct manual handling assessments of work activities taking into account the load, the individual, the task and the environment. Assessments only need to be recorded in writing if they cannot easily be verbally repeated.
- Provide handling aids and equipment.
- Obtain guidance and training on:

How to recognise harmful manual handling. Appropriate systems of work. Use of mechanical aids. Good handling techniques (see references below).

Legal Responsibilities for Others

There are legal duties under The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requiring employers and the self-employed to ensure that their work activities do not put others at risk, and to share information relating to any required emergency procedures and information.

References

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 - SI 1992/2793, HSE Books.

Manual Handling Guidance on Regulations - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 - L23, HSE Books, 1998.

Getting to Grips with Manual Handling, IND(G) 143 (rev.) HSE Books.

Manual handling solutions you can handle, HSG 115. HSE Books. ISBN 07176 069 37.

Upper limb disorders in the workplace HSG 60 (second edition).

Understanding ergonomics at work INDG90 (rev 2).

Manual Handling Assessment Charts INDG 383.

Available from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA Tel. 01787 881165.



Call us now on free phone **08081 686868**

Visit us at **WWW.CONSTRUCTAQUOTE.COM™**