

 UNSW <small>THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES</small>	Manual Handling Guideline
UNSW Guideline	
Control number	OHS432
Linked UNSW Policy	This procedure details actions and processes pursuant to UNSW OHS Policy
Responsible Officer	Director, Human Resources
Authorisation	Director, Human Resources
Contact Officer	Manager, OHS and Workers Compensation
Effective Date	1 January 2007
Superseded Documents	None
Review	This procedure will be reviewed in accordance with the UNSW OHS Management System Review Procedure
File Number	TRIM 2007/1229

1. Purpose

The objective of this procedure is to prevent the occurrence of injury and reduce the severity of injuries resulting from manual handling tasks performed by staff and students of the University.

Through the implementation of this procedure the University aims to achieve the following outcomes:-

- Preventing the occurrence of injury resulting from manual handling and reducing the severity of injury for staff and students engaged in manual handling tasks through adoption of a risk management approach.
- Supervisors of those involved in manual handling tasks identify and assess manual handling tasks prior to requesting individuals to perform manual handling tasks.
- Training all supervisors and staff involved in manual handling on how to identify, assess and control manual handling risks and train staff in safe manual handling.
- Purchasing and utilising ergonomic furniture and appropriate manual handling equipment to reduce the likelihood of injury.
- Planning of workplace layout and task design to minimise the risk of potential injury from manual handling tasks.
- All incidents involving manual handling injuries will be investigated by the Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committee or the Unit Manager.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all University staff and students performing manual handling tasks (including those working in teaching hospitals and other locations off-campus).

This procedure also covers the University College, Canberra, in relation to National Standard requirements only.

3. Definitions

- **Manual handling** means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold, restrain any animate or inanimate object.
- **Hazard** is a potential for causing injury, loss or danger.
- **Risk** is the likelihood of suffering injury, loss or danger depending on the frequency that a task is performed and the consequences that may ensue.
- **Risk factor** is an aspect of a task that contributes to an increased risk of injury, loss or danger.
- **Ergonomics** is the scientific study of human work. Ergonomics considers the physical and mental capabilities and limits of the worker and how he/she interacts with tools, equipment, work methods, tasks and the working environment.
- **Plant** includes any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement and tool, and anything fitted or connected to them.
- **Individuals** includes both staff and students.

4. Procedure

4.1 Responsibilities

4.1.1 The University

- Tasks are designed to eliminate or minimise the risk of manual handling injuries.
- A safe working environment is maintained for staff, students and visitors (including providing manual handling equipment).
- A safe system of work is developed and implemented for manual handling.
- Safe work practices are adopted by all staff and students performing manual handling tasks.
- Training, information and advice on safe manual handling is provided to all those performing manual handling tasks and using manual handling equipment.
- Adequate resources are allocated for implementing manual handling training and purchasing manual handling equipment to prevent injury to staff.

4.1.2 Deans of Faculties, Divisional Executives and Directors of Research Centres

- Allocating adequate human, financial and physical resources to the Schools, Divisional Units and Research Centres to ensure compliance with the University's Manual Handling Procedure.
- Ensuring that manual handling issues are considered when planning new facilities or relocating to a different location.

4.1.3 Heads of Schools and Divisional Units

- The effective implementation, promotion and support of the Manual Handling Procedure in their areas of responsibility. This shall include the identification, assessment and control of manual handling risks.
- Ensuring that staff and students receive appropriate information, instruction and training and the necessary supervision to perform manual handling tasks safely.
- Determining and allocating the financial provisions required for safe equipment, materials and training so that manual handling tasks can be performed safely.

4.1.4 Supervisors

- Implementing and maintaining safe manual handling procedures in accordance with the University's Manual Handling Procedure.
- Ensuring that staff and students under their control are properly trained in manual handling, and understand and follow safe manual handling practices.
- Actively practicing and developing positive attitudes towards safe manual handling in their staff and students.
- Ensure that staff and students under their control use safety equipment and aids provided for manual handling.
- Considering workplace layout, ergonomics and individual needs when allocating manual handling tasks to staff and students.

4.1.5 Individuals

- Complying with all manual handling safety instructions of their supervisor.
- Not putting themselves or others at risk by their actions or omissions.
- Making proper use of all manual handling aids, personal protective equipment and safety devices.
- Using training received in safe manual handling techniques and the correct use of mechanical aids, personal protective equipment and team lifting procedures, where possible.
- Reporting potential manual handling hazards or problems.

4.2 Risk Management

(Please refer to the [UNSW Risk Rating Scale](#))

Staff at all levels are responsible for developing an understanding of and becoming competent in the implementation of risk management principles and practices in their work areas.

This is a three-phase process.

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

4.2.1 Risk Identification

Identification of risks associated with manual handling should be undertaken by :-

- Reviewing the duties in the position description to identify manual handling risks
- Consultation with staff and students
- Direct observation of work practices
- Inspection of the task or work area so that they can be examined and assessed
- Audit of manual handling control measures by School/Divisional unit
- Examining workplace injury records, if possible, to identify where, and in what jobs, manual handling injuries have occurred

4.2.2 Risk assessment should occur:-

- Before introducing or modifying a manual handling procedure or practice
- After the risk identification process
- After a manual handling injury, and should take into account the following risk factors:-
 - Actions and movements required to perform the task
 - Workplace and work station layout
 - Working posture and position
 - Duration and frequency of manual handling
 - Location of loads and distances moved
 - Weights and forces of objects to be handled
 - Characteristics of loads and equipment
 - Work organisation
 - Work environment
 - Skill and experience
 - Personal characteristics such as stature, height, strength of the individual
 - Clothing which might be restrictive for the task
 - Any other relevant factor

4.2.3 Risk Control Measures

Risk control is the process of eliminating or reducing identified and assessed risk factors and can be best accomplished by a combination of :-

- Job redesign
- Mechanical handling equipment
- Provision of training
- Administrative controls

Care should be taken to ensure that further risks to health and safety are not created by the application of control methods aimed at the reduction of manual handling risks.

Risk control should be done in consultation with staff and students who are required to carry out the manual handling tasks and their representatives on health and safety issues. (e.g. Workplace Occupational Health & Safety Committee).

Control options should include (in order of preference):-

- Remove the need for manual handling
- Modify the object, e.g. reduce the packaging size
- Modify the workplace layout
- Rearrange the materials flow
- Use mechanical handling equipment
- Use special tools or other devices
- Use team lifting arrangements to modify actions, movements and forces required
- Use particular training or instruction

The degree of urgency for implementation of the risk controls is determined by:-

- The risk involved – in terms of potential severity together with the likely consequences
- The frequency that the task is performed
- Simplicity of implementation of the risk controls
- Effectiveness of the risk controls implemented
- The cost of implementing the risk controls

Other relevant factors such as :-

- Job redesign, e.g. modification of work practices, plant, equipment, containers taking into account people dimensions
- Mechanical handling equipment including staff trials and training in the use of the equipment
- Training in manual handling techniques
- Administrative controls

4.3 Training

4.3.1 Target Groups

The National Standard for Manual Handling [NOHSC: 1001(1990) has been adopted in the NSW Regulation on Manual Handling (1991). This Standard states that employers must ensure that employees involved in manual handling receive appropriate training, including training in safe manual handling techniques.

In addition to the employees involved in manual handling, other target groups who also require training include :-

- Supervisors and managers of employees involved in manual handling tasks

- Employees' representative(s) on health and safety issues, i.e. Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committees
- Staff responsible for work organisation, job and task design

4.3.2 Training Objectives

Objectives in relation to training should be established and should include :-

- The prevention of manual handling injuries by a process of risk identification, risk assessment and implementation of control measures
- The recognition and promotion of understanding of the nature of manual handling
- The promotion and use of safe manual handling techniques

4.3.3 Training Content

The content of the training program should be tailored to the specific needs of the group being trained and topics should include :-

- A review of the risks to health and the potential effects of manual handling on the body
- The magnitude of the problem
- Job and individual risk factors associated with manual handling injuries
- Control strategies, with primary emphasis being on work organisation, job and task design
- Safe manual handling techniques
- The safe use of mechanical handling aids and personal protective equipment
- Responsibilities of the parties

4.3.4 Particular Training

Particular training should follow an analysis of the task(s) involved, which will have identified the risk factors present. If the analysis has eliminated any job redesign options as a control measure, then particular training on how to do the job safely and with least risk should be provided.

The training should be specific to the task and should aim to ensure that the employee: -

- Understands the reasons for performing the task with least risk
- Can recognise the risks and decide the most appropriate method to complete the task
- Can perform the task in the correct way

Any training provided for employees who are required to perform manual handling tasks should also be provided to their supervisors.

4.4 Recommendations Regarding Purchase and Use of Lifting Equipment

- All Units purchasing manual handling equipment should contact OHS & Workers Compensation for advice prior to purchase and should ensure that it complies with Australian Standards.
- All Heads of Schools and Unit managers should also ensure that load capacities are clearly marked on all lifting equipment and that the lifting equipment is used only for the load capacity and purpose intended.
- Unit Managers should ensure that staff and students are trained in the safe use of manual handling equipment.
- Heads of Schools and Unit Managers should ensure that risk assessments are conducted prior to using manual handling equipment.

5. Legal & Policy Framework

- National Standard for Manual Handling and National Code of Practice for Manual Handling. February 1990. Worksafe Australia
- NSW Occupational Health and Safety (Manual Handling) Regulation 2001
- NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000

5.1 Associated Documents

6. Evaluation & History

The procedure will be monitored and evaluated by the OHS & Workers Compensation in conjunction with Unit Managers and Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committees.

The effectiveness of this procedure and its outcomes will be measured by:-

- Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committees compiling and analysing injury statistics on a regular basis to identify and assess whether the incidence and severity of manual handling injuries is reducing over time.
- Supervisors planning and documenting the identification and assessment of the risks associated with manual handling tasks within their area.
- Training records, which indicate that supervisors and staff involved in manual handling have completed manual handling training in order of priority of risk.
- The Purchasing Department monitoring records of furniture and equipment purchased to ensure that only ergonomic furniture and equipment is purchased from preferred vendors.
- Supervisors (and OHS & Workers Compensation, if consulted for advice) documenting the assessment of current workplace layout and task design and the assessment of any change to the layout or task.
- Cross referencing the workers compensation claims database with the OHS & Workers Compensation Unit's incident reporting register to confirm that all serious manual handling accidents have been investigated and reported.

6.1 Modifications

Version	Date	Author	Approval	Sections modified	Details of amendments
Policy draft	18/05/2000	Beth Hawkins			Policy drafted, communicated and in use but not formally approved
1.0	01/01/2007	Annette MacManus	Director Human Resources	All	Document reformatted. Remove links to RMU.

7. Acknowledgements

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- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Adelaide
- University of Sydney
- University of Queensland
- University of Melbourne