

Over one third of reportable injuries in the UK are caused by manual handling. Manual Handling can also be a contributory factor in slip/trip, fall from height and other accident types. Uncontrolled manual handling can lead to a wide spectrum of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), including back pain and work related upper limb disorders ranging in symptoms and severity. Injury and ill-health can arise due to over-exertion, cumulative damage and acute accidental injury. Despite many employers' best intentions and efforts to avoid and reduce the need for manual lifting and handling, it often remains an unavoidable requirement of their operations and MSD still represent a significant proportion of civil injury claims in the UK.



Minimum standards

- A prioritised approach is adopted to identify, analyse, avoid and reduce manual handling activities. Where controls have been adopted but 'residual risk' remains employers are required to carry out a risk assessment taking into account the load, individual, task and environment, and introduce controls to minimise the risk as far as is reasonably practicable
- Manual handling training needs are assessed, addressed, and incorporated as part of a documented safe system of work. This will include training in the use of handling aids and equipment provided for high risk tasks
- Training programmes are developed based on risk assessments and safe systems of work, ensuring that correct anatomical principles and manual handling techniques are taught where there is residual risk. Training is bespoke to the situation or task, focusing on reducing acute and cumulative pressures on the body. Training is engaging, achievable and preferably delivered in the work environment rather than the classroom, demonstrating specific and 'correct' techniques in a way that employees on the front line can easily understand and replicate. Correct application of training is validated at suitable intervals
- Front line managers, employees, safety representatives are properly engaged and participate in the risk assessment process, selection of controls and subsequent reviews
- Systems are in place for the early reporting and investigation of injuries related to suspected causative work activities
- Case management and rehabilitation facilities are utilised and procedures applied following any accident, to manage employees appropriately and safely back to work.



Best practice standards

✓	A selection of measurable indicators is used to quantify the impact of manual handling related exposure accurately and to build a business case for action. This will include analysis of accident, absence and claims data to determine causation and location trends.
✓	A risk based action plan is developed to focus on key areas of exposure.
✓	Work systems are assessed using ergonomic principles, either in house or by third party specialists, and engineered to avoid the need for manual handling or to reduce risk. This requires involvement at capex project design and process modification stage. Interventions are systematically applied to work systems/employees.
✓	Media such as training videos, DVDs and e-learning are used to supplement face to face training, refresher training and where traditional face to face training is not practical. Media such as this can also be used to record and evidence systems of work.
✓	A system is in place which takes into account employees fitness, health and capability when matching them to the tasks they are asked to perform e.g. functional capacity evaluation (FCE) via an occupational health provider.

Legal requirements

The Manual Handling Operations Regs 1992 are the main, but not exclusive, provision requiring employers to avoid the need for employees to undertake manual handling operations. Where this is not practical or possible, then employers are required to carry out a risk assessment taking into account the load, individual, task and environment, and introduce controls as to minimise the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. 'Residual risk' must be managed by 'lower order' controls such as employing ergonomic principles to working practices, the use of mechanical and lifting aids, and training and supervision.

Guidance and useful information

- HSE Website: MSD / Manual Handling Pages
- QBE Issues Forum: Manual Lifting and Handling
- QBE Issues Forum: Rehabilitation and Active Case Management for MSD

Further information

For more information please visit: www.QBEurope.com/rs or email us on RS@uk.qbe.com

Disclaimer

This publication has been produced by QBE Insurance (Europe) Ltd (QIEL). QIEL is a company member of the QBE Insurance Group. Readership of this publication does not create an insurer-client, or other business or legal relationship. This publication provides information about the law to help you to understand and manage risk within your organisation. For full details of the disclaimer surrounding this publication please visit www.QBEurope.com/legal/publication-disclaimer.asp

QBE Insurance Group

Plantation Place 30 Fenchurch Street London EC3M 3BD
tel +44 (0)20 7105 4000 www.QBEurope.com

5248CC/RiskManagementStandards/ManualHandling/September2015
QBE Insurance (Europe) Limited, QBE Re (Europe) Limited and QBE Underwriting Limited, all of which are authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, are part of QBE European Operations, a division of the QBE Insurance group.

