

Hazardous Manual Task Risk Reduction Guide

Many roles within the University require some form of manual handling. The degree of manual handling will depend on the nature of the role and the resources available to eliminate or control the hazardous manual task. The University has a legislative requirement to eliminate or minimise the risks associated with manual tasks, so far as reasonably practicable.

Risk Management Process

To reduce the risk of an injury occurring as a result of hazardous manual task, the following steps must be followed:

1. Hazardous Manual Task Identification

Identification of hazardous manual tasks should be completed through:

- Consultation with workers – this can be achieved by observing workers performing their work duties and engaging in conversation with them. Determine if there are tasks that are difficult to perform, cause fatigue or awkward postures/positions that may result in feelings of discomfort. Observation can provide visual information on the posture and movements required to complete a task.
- Review available information – this will assist in identifying any trends and can include reported injuries, incidents or inspection reports.
- Evaluation of tasks – should be completed when there are changes to the task, activity or process.

The Hazardous Manual Task Identification Worksheet and Guide can assist in the review and documentation of manual tasks.

2. Assess the Risk

Once a hazardous manual task has been identified, it is important to examine it in more detail to determine what aspects of the task may contribute to a musculoskeletal disorder or injury. This is completed in the form of a risk assessment.

The risk assessment should be completed in consultation with the workers who are involved in or may be affected by the hazardous manual task. All steps of the task need to be examined to ensure a comprehensive assessment. Factors to consider include:

- Does the task involve repetitive movement?
- Does the task involve sustained or awkward postures?
- Does the task involve repetitive or sustained forces?
- Is the task performed for a long duration?
- Is sudden or high force involved in the task?
- Does the task involve vibration?

Sources of risk to consider include:

- Work area design and layout – consider the position and layout of equipment, furniture and fittings.
- The nature, size, weight and shape of things being handled.
- Systems of work – consider the pace and time constraints of work, availability of resources and other arrangements that can impact on the demands of the task.
- Environment – consider the temperature, humidity, surface stability, lighting and indoor or outdoor conditions.

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3. Controlling the Risks

Risk control measures are ranked in terms of their level of protection and reliability, forming the Hierarchy of Controls. It is a requirement that the Hierarchy of Controls is applied when implementing a risk control measure to effectively eliminate or minimise the identified risk. One or more control measure may be required.

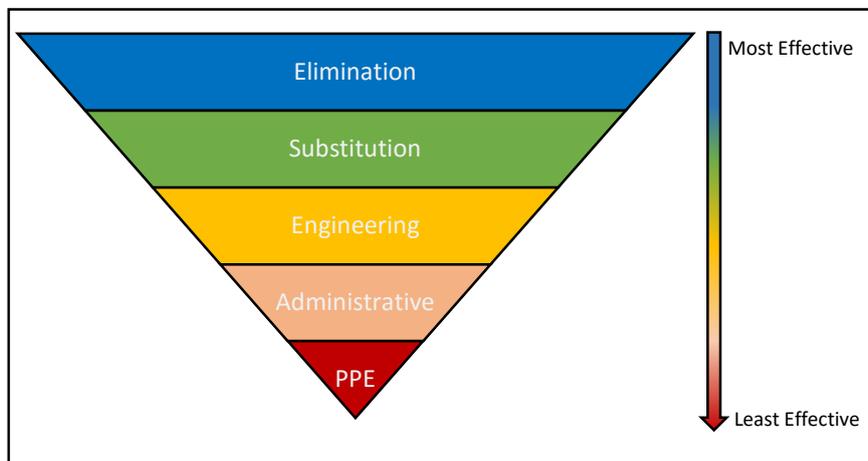


Figure 1. Hierarchy of Controls – the effectiveness of the controls reduces when moving down the hierarchy.

Effective risk controls can include:

- Purchasing of equipment – ensure the design, space requirements, physical characteristics and specifications of tools, equipment or containers prior to purchase to minimise the risk when introduced to the workplace.
- Changing the work design or layout – changes to the storage location of items, bench heights and position of equipment
- Changing the nature, size, weight or number of items handled
- Mechanical aids – equipment or tools such as trolleys, hoists or cranes that suit the load and function of the task.
- Administrative controls – job rotation, rest breaks, manual handling training and instruction.
- Personal protective equipment – equipment selected to assist in minimising a risk. This is the lowest level of control and should be used in conjunction with more effective risk control measures.

4. Implementing Controls

Workers should be involved in the selection and implementation of risk control measures, including any trial of control measures where possible. It is important that the appropriate training, instruction, information and supervision is provided during this process.

Implemented control measures should be reviewed and revised following the risk assessment process to ensure they are effective in their role of reducing risk in the workplace.

If additional information is needed, please contact the [WHS Unit](#).