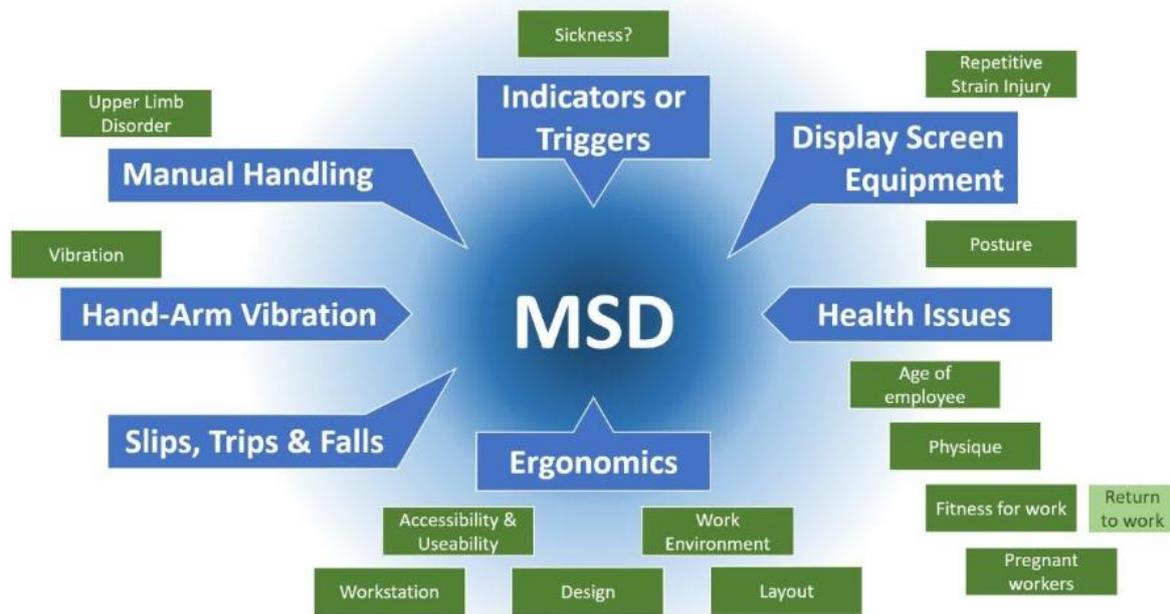


CDOIF: Managing Manual Handling Risks to Prevent MSDs: A guide to recognising and managing Manual Handling Risks, associated with MSD's within the workplace.



Manual handling can be a common aspect of tasks across many sectors, particularly in physically demanding work as is often found in the chemical industry. However, poorly managed manual handling can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), including back injuries and repetitive strain injuries.

This guide provides practical steps for managing manual handling risks in line with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR) and associated HSE guidance.

Why is this important?

Managing the risks associated with manual handling is essential for preventing injury and:

- Promoting employee health and wellbeing
- Ensuring health and safety standards are upheld
- Ensuring legal duty of care is met under MHOR by:
 - Eliminating hazardous manual handling where possible.
 - Assessing the risk of injury where manual handling cannot be avoided.
 - Reducing the risk of injury as far as is reasonably practicable.

Line Managers and workers both play a key role in ensuring these responsibilities are met at a local level.

How do I know if a worker is impacted?

Workers may be at risk of suffering from MSDs if they experience:

- Discomfort or pain during or after tasks
- Faulty, damaged or inadequate handling equipment
- Excessive workload or poor task layout.

Employees and contractors should be encouraged and supported to report these issues so that you can respond quickly and assess the factors involved.

What should I be doing?

- Identify all manual handling tasks in your area
- Eliminate unnecessary manual handling where possible
- Where manual handling activities are unavoidable, carry out and record manual handling risk assessments, including consideration of Task, Load, Individual and Environment (TILE) factors to evaluate the risk, and periodically review these.
- Provide appropriate tools and handling aids
- Train staff on the risks from poor manual handling and on safe handling techniques
- Supervise, and correct any unsafe practices
- Respond quickly to reports of discomfort or unsafe tasks.

Identifying The Risks using TILE

All tasks that involve manual handling (e.g lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling or moving by hand or bodily force) should be risk assessed, with consideration given to the following:

- The task itself (e.g what object(s) is being handled, the distance involved, frequency or repetitiveness of task)
- Individual capability (e.g strength, experience, overall health and physical status of the worker)
- Load weight, shape and grip factors (e.g handles, greasy, bulky, sharp, containing loose parts or fluid that could move during the task)
- Environment (e.g floor surfaces, lighting, tight spaces)
- Other factors such as posture during the task (e.g bending, twisting, or lifting above shoulder height / below knee height).

Implementing Control Measures - Examples

- *Eliminate*: Redesign or automate work processes to eliminate manual handling where this is practicable.
- *Substitute / Provide Engineering Controls*: When manual handling cannot be avoided, take action to reduce harm by:
 - Providing handling aids (e.g drum rollers, conveyors, sack trucks)
 - Adjusting workstations to reduce bending and reaching for objects
 - Managing floor surfaces and lighting, i.e. removing obstacles and obstructions

- Limiting distances that loads need to be carried.
- Ensuring pedestrian routes are free from tripping hazards or obstructions.
- **Provide Administrative Controls:**
 - Train workers on the risks associated with manual handling and the recommended safe handling techniques / considerations,
 - Rotate staff to limit individual exposure to manual handling risks
 - Set task duration limits
 - implement permits to work for higher risk tasks.
- **PPE:** Consider gloves for grip and protection, and overalls to protect from debris / potential contact with substances.

Carrying Out Training & Communicating the Risks

It is essential that workers understand:

- Which tasks carry manual handling risks, including the impact of task duration and frequency
- What is involved in different manual handling operations and how to carry them out safely, including how to use any lifting aids
- The signs and symptoms of injury and how unsafe manual handling practices can contribute to these
- How to report concerns or symptoms.

Getting workers involved in the risk assessment process and providing information and training are effective means of ensuring worker understanding. This might include using a mix of: toolbox talks, signage, digital learning modules, team training sessions, and one-to-one discussions based on the typical tools and tasks in the workplace.

How can I do it?

- Identify all manual handling tasks in your area
- Eliminate unnecessary manual handling where possible
- Complete and update manual handling risk assessments
- Use the TILE method to evaluate risk
- Provide appropriate tools and handling aids
- Train staff on safe handling techniques
- Monitor compliance and correct unsafe practices
- Respond quickly to reports of discomfort or unsafe tasks
- Encourage a proactive health and safety culture

What are the Key Indicators of Good Practice?

- Workplace risk assessments consider manual handling risks, including tools used, task duration and individuals exposed
- Appropriate control measures are implemented
- Workers feel safe to raise concerns and request adjustments
- A programme of monitoring is in place, and OH support is available as appropriate.

Further Information:

- [Manual handling at work: Assess manual handling you can't avoid - HSE](#)
- [Musculoskeletal disorders at work - HSE](#)
- HSE Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC Tool) www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac