

SAFELEC LTD

**Manual Handling Risk
Assessment**

**Procedure
(HS.1.09)**

MANUAL HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE NOTE

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HS.1.09.1F Lifting and Carrying Assessment Form
HS.1.09.2F Pushing and Pulling Assessment Form
HS.1.09.3F Team Lifts Assessment Form

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) requires employers to:

- **avoid** the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- **assess** the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided; and
- **reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The risk should be reduced to the lowest level 'reasonably practicable'. That means reducing the risk until the cost of any further precautions - time, effort or money - would be far too great in proportion to the benefits.

1.2 Manual handling activities include lifting, pushing, pulling or carrying. The load may be either inanimate – such as a box or a trolley, or animate – a person or an animal.

1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Risk Assessment Procedure (HS.1.01).

2.0 Risk Assessment

2.1 Under the regulations, employers are required to ensure that risk assessment is carried out on manual handling tasks.

2.2 Stage 1

An initial, generic, assessment must be carried out in respect of risks created by all manual handling activities in the workplace. The corporate health and safety risk assessment form (HS.1.01.1F) must be used. A generic assessment is one that is common to several employees or to more than one site or type of work. This should only be done if there are no individual or local factors that need to be taken into account, for example differences in stature, competence etc.

2.3 Stage 2

Where the employee is required to routinely undertake a manual handling operation, or, where the specific manual handling operation has been highlighted as medium or high risk in the generic assessment, a risk assessment specific to that task, within the environment and related to specific employees who undertake the operation should be carried out.

You may need to carry out individual risk assessments for employees with a disability and to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in particular section 6).

The following corporate manual handling risk assessment forms must be used:

- HS.1.09.1F Lifting and Carrying Form
- HS.1.09.2F Pushing and Pulling Form
- HS.1.09.3F Team Lifts Form

- 2.3 Assessments should identify all significant risks of injury and point the way to practical improvements.
- 2.4 Factors to consider when carrying out a manual handling risk assessment are the task, load, working environment, individual capability, handling aids and equipment and work organisation factors (see Table 1 below).

Table 1 Making an assessment (cont'd on next page)

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>The tasks, do they involve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holding loads away from the body? ▪ Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? ▪ Large vertical movement? ▪ Long carrying distances? ▪ Strenuous pushing or pulling? ▪ Repetitive handling? ▪ Insufficient rest or recovery time? ▪ A work rate imposed by a process? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a lifting aid? ▪ Improve workplace layout to improve efficiency? ▪ Reduce the amount of twisting and stooping? ▪ Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads? ▪ Reduce carrying distances? ▪ Avoid repetitive handling? ▪ Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used? ▪ Push rather than pull?
<p><i>The loads, are they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heavy, bulky or unwieldy? ▪ Difficult to grasp? ▪ Unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)? ▪ Harmful, eg sharp or hot? ▪ Awkwardly stacked? ▪ Too large for the handler to see over? 	<p><i>Can you make the load:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lighter or less bulky? ▪ Easier to grasp? ▪ More stable? ▪ Less damaging to hold? <p>If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg provide handles or smaller packages?</p>
<p><i>The working environment, are there:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constraints on posture? ▪ Bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? ▪ Variations in levels? ▪ Hot/cold/humid conditions? ▪ Gusts of wind or other strong air movements? ▪ Poor lighting conditions? ▪ Restrictions on movements or posture from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove obstructions to free movement? ▪ Provide better flooring? ▪ Avoid steps and steep ramps? ▪ Prevent extremes of hot and cold? ▪ Improve lighting? ▪ Provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? ▪ Ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for work?

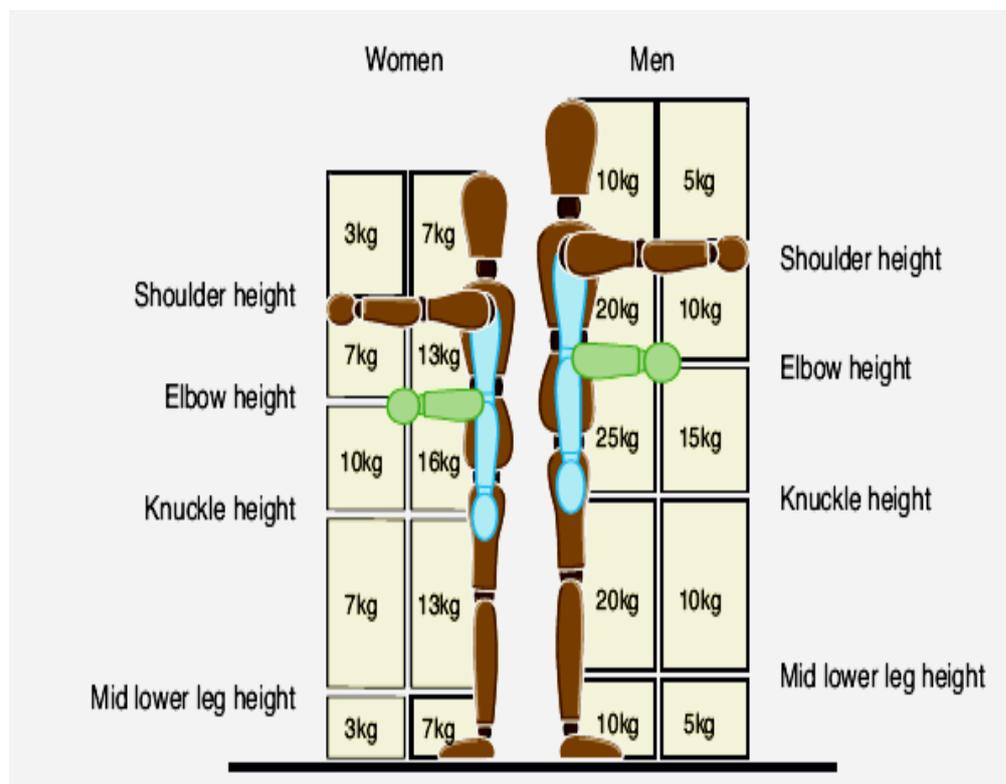
Table 1 Making an assessment (cont'd)

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>Individual capacity, does the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require unusual capability, eg above-average strength or agility? ▪ Endanger those with a health problems or learning/physical disability? ▪ Endanger pregnant women? ▪ Call for special information or training/ 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness ▪ Take extra care of pregnant workers? ▪ Give your employees more information, eg about the range of tasks they are likely to face? ▪ Provide more training (see 'What about training?') <p>Get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to.</p>
<p><i>Handling aids and equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the device the correct type for the job? ▪ Is it well maintained? ▪ Are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface? ▪ Do the wheels run freely? ▪ Is the handle height between the waist and shoulders? ▪ Are the handle grips in good order and comfortable? ▪ Are there any brakes? If so, do they work? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide equipment that is more suitable for the task? ▪ Carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems? ▪ Change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily? ▪ Provide better handles and handle grips? ▪ Make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?
<p><i>Work organisation factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the work repetitive or boring? ▪ Is work machine or system-paced? ▪ Do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive? ▪ Have workers little control of the work and working methods?? ▪ Is there poor communication between managers and employees? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change tasks to reduce the monotony? ▪ Make more use of workers' skills? ▪ Make workloads and deadlines more achievable? ▪ Encourage good communication and teamwork? ▪ Involve workers in decisions? ▪ Provide better training and information?

3.0 General Guidelines

- 3.1 Spend some time observing the task to ensure that what you are seeing is representative of normal working procedures.
- 3.2 Consult employees during the assessment process. Where several people do the same task, make sure you have some insight into demands of the job from all workers' perspectives.
- 3.3 Use Figure 1 below to make a quick and easy assessment. Each box contains a guideline weight for lifting and lowering in that zone. (As you can see, the guideline weights are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to occur.)

Figure 1



- 3.4 Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to the diagram. First, decide which box or boxes (see figure 1) the lifter's hands pass through when moving the load. Then, assess the maximum weight being handled. If it is less than the figure given in the box, the operation is within the guidelines. It may help to video tape the task so you can view it over again, away from the workplace, if necessary.
- 3.5 If the lifter's hands enter more than one box during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between boxes.

- 3.6 The guideline weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the lifter in a stable body position.

4.0 Team lifts

- 4.1 When assessing the amount of weight that can be lifted by a group, the individual lifting guidelines highlighted in Figure 1 do not apply, as the amount of weight that can be lifted has **no correlation** to the number of people within the team. When conducting a team lift manual handling assessments use form HS.1.09.3F.

Recommended approach to team lifts:

- Have one person in charge.
- Decide who is doing what before you start.
- Use clear instructions.
- It is best if handlers are similar heights / physiques.
- Share the load evenly.
- Lifting capacity:

2 people lift – 70% of 2 people’s capability

3 people lift – 50% of 3 people’s capability

4 people lift – 43% of 4 people’s capability

5.0 Assessing the risk

- 5.1 Use the correct Manual Handling Assessment form to undertake an assessment of the activity that is being conducted. There are three different types of forms and these cover:

- HS.1.09.1F Lifting and Carrying Form
- HS.1.09.2F Pushing and Pulling Form
- HS.1.09.3F Team Lifts Form

- 5.2 Work through the assessments and assign the level of risk that the specific operation poses to the employee carrying out the activity, low, medium or high risk.

Low risk Accident resulting in a minor injury that would allow the person to continue work after 1st aid treatment on site.

Medium risk Injury or harm that results in up to 3 days absence.

High risk Injury that potentially results in:

- member of public attends hospital for treatment
- major injury as defined under RIDDOR

- member of staff being unable to undertake normal duties for 3 days +
- death

5.3 Once this has been done, use the assessment to assign an overall level of risk to the manual handling operation. Then put in place any necessary control measures to ensure that the risk is to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

6.0 When should assessment be reviewed?

6.1 The assessments must be reviewed:

- If there is a reason to suspect that it is no longer valid.
- If there has been a change to the manual handling operations to which it relates.
- If individual employees report adverse symptoms, become ill, injured or disabled, or return following a long period of sickness.

7.0 Further Information

7.1 Please contact the Health and Safety Section with any queries on the information contained within this guide. Manual handling risk assessment is covered in the manual handling training course. A specific manual handling risk assessment training course can also be arranged.

7.2 Further assistance on manual handling and assessments can be gained from the Health and Safety Section tel. 522156.