



Procedure

Managing manual tasks

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Version: 1.0

Audience

Department-wide

Purpose

This procedure outlines the specific legislative requirements and Department of Education (the department) processes for managing and reducing risks associated with hazardous manual tasks. The process applies to the assessment of all manual tasks performed at departmental workplaces.

Overview

Manual tasks cover a wide range of activities. Some of these manual tasks can be hazardous and may cause musculoskeletal disorders. In accordance with the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#), the department manages risks associated with these tasks by systematically identifying hazardous manual tasks, assessing the risk, implementing suitable risk control measures, and reviewing the effectiveness of these controls. This procedure does not apply to [Manual tasks – assisting students with physical impairments](#).

Responsibilities

All employees

- Actively participate in risk assessments undertaken by principals, managers or supervisors to identify hazardous manual tasks
- Comply with all reasonable instructions provided by a principal, manager or supervisor in relation to health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) including instructions within safe operating procedures (SOPs)
- Identify and report hazards and risks to the principal, manager or supervisor. Where employees, contractors and others have been requested/trained to do so, they must control the risk as far as is reasonably practicable
- Follow safe work practices to eliminate or minimise the risk associated with hazardous manual tasks as far as is reasonably practicable
- Where required, seek and participate in training identified by the department for performing hazardous manual tasks.



Principal, managers and supervisors

- Maintain awareness of all workplace operations, associated hazards and risks, and consult with employees on the management of risks associated with hazardous manual tasks
- Undertake risk assessments of manual tasks to assess if they are hazardous and to identify controls
- Provide HSW information, instruction, supervision and training to all employees performing or who may be affected by hazardous manual tasks
- Ensure the maintenance and accessibility of records related to the identification, assessment and control of hazards and risks associated with hazardous manual tasks, including but not limited to:
 - risk assessments
 - hazard register
 - safe operating procedures
 - training records.

Process

1. Create and maintain a safe workplace

Prevent the introduction of hazardous manual tasks

- When manual tasks are required, review the tasks to prevent the introduction of hazards and risk of injury or illness e.g. avoid repetitive or sustained force, high or sudden force, sustained or awkward postures, exposure to vibration
- Ensure equipment is appropriate for the tasks and the person undertaking the manual tasks
- Undertake a pre-task review to identify and eliminate potential hazardous manual tasks
- Ensure employees and others performing or who may be affected by the tasks are trained to identify and mitigate manual task hazards e.g. by ensuring postural breaks, correct use of equipment.

2. Identify hazards

Determine which manual tasks are hazardous

- On the introduction of a new manual task, or the revision of an existing one, employees and others performing or who may be affected by a hazardous manual tasks should review the tasks with their principal, manager or supervisor to determine if it could be hazardous i.e. likely to cause an incident, injury, ill health or fatality
- To assist in the identification of potential hazardous manual tasks, principals, managers, supervisors are to research the tasks to identify potential hazards. This research is achieved through the review of records of reported incidents and workers' compensation claims involving musculoskeletal disorders. Additional information can be gathered from the Annual Safety Assessment (ASA) and existing risk assessments, as well as speaking with the person performing the tasks, consultation with colleagues and review of written documentation such as safe operating procedures

- The principal, manager, supervisor or delegate should observe those performing the manual tasks and monitor their postures and movements. Note any forceful exertions applied, sustained or awkward positions adopted, repetitive behaviour encountered or vibration from equipment
- If a hazard is identified the risk is to be assessed.

3. Assessment of risk

Conduct risk assessments for all manual tasks identified as potentially hazardous

- The principal, manager, supervisor or delegate is to complete a risk assessment of the identified manual tasks using the [ManTRA eTool](#), the paper based [ManTRA tool](#) or the [Hazardous manual tasks risk assessment template](#). In doing so, they should:
 - Identify those who should participate in the risk assessment and involve the [Health and Safety Advisor](#) if a more detailed assessment is needed or a [Health and Safety Representative](#) as requested
 - Identify if any of the following risk factors are present:
 - force
 - repetitive movement
 - sustained or awkward posture
 - vibration
 - Identify possible contributing factors:
 - the design of the work area
 - the use of any tools or equipment
 - the systems of work used e.g. the way tasks are performed
 - the nature of the load e.g. size, weight of persons, animals or objects
 - Examine the characteristics of the hazardous manual tasks in greater detail by determining which obligatory postures, movements and forces pose a risk. Consider what body parts are affected, how they are affected and to what extent
 - Determine which actions should be taken to control the risks based on the likelihood of an incident or injury occurring and the potential consequences
- If assisting a student with a disability, use the [Risk Assessment template – Manual tasks – assisting students with physical impairments](#), which is part of the [Manual tasks – assisting students with physical impairments](#) procedure.



4. Implement controls

Determine and implement hazardous manual tasks controls

- Using the assessment templates, the principal, manager or supervisor is to determine whether existing controls or precautions are adequate, or if more should be done to minimise risk
- If more can be done, identify the source of risk and implement the most effective control possible using the hierarchy of risk control. Start at elimination and work down the list as outlined below:
 - elimination: remove the hazard completely from the workplace or activity
 - substitution: replace a hazard with a less dangerous one e.g. use equipment to lift a bin
 - isolation: separate people from the hazard e.g. install a safety barrier
 - redesign: change a work process or layout of a work area e.g. raise a work bench to avoid leaning forward
 - administration: put rules of training in place to make a workplace safer e.g. manual handling training for staff
 - personal protective equipment: dress the potentially exposed employees in protective clothing and equipment e.g. gloves, hearing protection
- A single control measure or a combination of two or more measures may be necessary to provide the highest level of protection that is reasonably practicable. Ensure that no new hazards are introduced as a consequence of these controls
- Principals, managers and supervisors may obtain examples of applicable controls from different sources including:
 - [Hazardous manual tasks – Code of Practice 2011](#)
 - research
 - ideas of employees
 - other similar workplace
- Principals, managers and supervisors should communicate the reasons for change to all impacted employees and others to allow them to trial solutions and provide feedback prior to making them permanent
- Principals, managers or supervisors are to provide training to employees and others who are performing the tasks to ensure they are competent to use any new equipment or for the performance of any new technique or method. The training is to focus on:
 - the types of control measures implemented
 - methods of work including procedures e.g. how and when to use particular mechanical aids and assistive devices safely
 - organisational requirements such as reporting problems or maintenance issues



- Ensure records of any training conducted for employees and others, including departmental online training, is kept for a minimum of 10 years. These records must contain all the relevant information about the delivered training, including:
 - date of session
 - subjects covered
 - name of the instructor that conducted the session and the company they represent
 - names of those who attended the session.

5. Review of hazardous manual task risk and controls

Evaluate the risk controls to ensure their effectiveness

- Hazardous manual task risks are to be reviewed annually as a part of the [Annual Safety Assessment](#) (DoE employees only). They should also be reviewed whenever new tasks are introduced, or existing tasks/equipment change is revised
- Using the Hazardous manual tasks risk assessment template, the principal, manager or supervisor is to review and monitor any control measures that have been implemented by using the same methods applied in step 2 (Identify hazards). Revise them if they are not working to plan, or not maintaining a safe and healthy environment
- Records of manual tasks risk assessments are to be maintained
- Principals, managers or supervisors must monitor the risks, and review preventative measures to ensure new risks have not been created by changes in the workplace or by implementation of controls. Do this by:
 - consulting with employees regularly about their task requirements and their suggestions for improvements
 - evaluate the risks before purchasing equipment
 - supply fit-for-purpose equipment supported by a regular equipment maintenance program
 - encourage all employees and others to report hazards and incidents, and action those reports under consultation with the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee](#) as applicable
- Monitor workplace incident reports and workers' compensation claims to determine if controls have had any impact on reducing injuries or illnesses. Incident reports can also help to find patterns and ways to work towards a reduction in hazards and incidents
- Consult with employees and others undertaking manual tasks and their health and safety representative for feedback on the new control measures
- Provide up-to-date training and hazard information to employees and others undertaking manual tasks or who are affected by the process to ensure controls are still appropriate
- The principal, manager or supervisor is to ensure that the workplace HSW Hazard Register via [MyHR WHS](#) (DoE employees only) is kept up to date.

Definitions

Hazard	An object or situation that has the potential to harm a person, the environment or cause damage to property. Hazards at work may include: noisy machinery, a moving vehicle, chemicals, electricity, working at heights, a repetitive job and violence at the workplace.
Hazardous manual tasks	Tasks that require a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or object that involves one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repetitive force – using force repeatedly over a period of time to move or support an object • sustained force – occurs when force is applied continually over a period of time • high force or sudden force – tasks where force is applied suddenly and with speed • repetitive movement – using the same body parts to repeat similar movements over a period of time • sustained or awkward posture – where part of or the whole body is kept in the same position for a prolonged period • exposure to vibration – whole body vibration or hand/arm vibration.
Hierarchy of control	Control measures should be considered and used in this order: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elimination: remove the hazard completely from the workplace or activity 2. Substitution: replace a hazard with a less dangerous one (e.g. using a less hazardous chemical) 3. Isolation: separate people from the hazard (e.g. safety barrier) 4. Redesign: changing a work process or layout of a work area 5. Administration: putting rules and/or training in place to make a workplace safer 6. Personal protective equipment: protective clothing and equipment (e.g. safety glasses, hearing protection).
Manual handling/people handling	Those workplace activities requiring the use of force exerted to hold, support, transfer (lift, lower, carry, push, pull, slide), or restrain another person at a workplace.
Manual tasks	Tasks that involve using the body to move or hold an object, person or animal.
Musculoskeletal disorder	An injury, illness or disease that arises in whole or in part from manual handling in the workplace, whether suddenly occurring or over a prolonged period of time, but does not include an injury, illness or disease caused by crushing, entrapment or cut resulting primarily from the mechanical operation of plant.
MyHR WHS	An online web based system used to report incidents and record incident information and management actions.

Others	<p>A person other than an employee or worker as defined by the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students • parent, guardian or carer • visitor • delivery drivers.
Reasonable instruction	<p>Doing what a reasonable person would do or instruct on in the circumstance, with regard to aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person's knowledge • the person's role • the person's skills and the resources available to them • the person's qualifications • the information the person has, and • the consequences to health and safety of a failure for them to act in the circumstances.
Reasonably practicable	<p>The things that could be done at a particular time to ensure health and safety measures were in place. Deciding what is 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm requires taking into account and weighing up matters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned occurring • the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk • knowledge about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk • the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk • after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of the occurrence of injury, illness and harm.
Safe Operating Procedures	<p>A safe operating procedure is a written document that provides step-by-step instructions on how to safely perform a task or activity which involves some risk to health and safety. (A safe operating procedure is sometimes referred to as a safe work procedure or safe work method statement).</p>
Workers' compensation	<p>Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illness can lodge a workers' compensation claim for costs, including medical, hospital, rehabilitation, wages and lump sum payments. WorkCover Queensland assess all claims for compensation in accordance with the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 (Qld).</p>

Workplace	<p>A location where work is, or is to be, performed by a worker for, or on behalf of the department. Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a school • an off-site excursion or work location • an approved flexible work location • an office (e.g. regional or central office site) • an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) location • a vehicle supplied by an employer for use by a worker in the performance of a work.
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Legislation

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#) (Part 2 – Health and safety duties)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#) (Part 4.2 Hazardous Manual Tasks)
- [Hazardous manual tasks – Code of Practice 2011](#)
- [Manual tasks involving the handling of people – Code of Practice 2001](#)
- [How to manage work health and safety risks – Code of Practice 2011](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- Nil

Related procedures

- [Annual safety assessment](#)
- [Manual tasks – assisting students with physical impairments](#)

Guidelines

- Nil

Supporting information/websites

- [Manual tasks – assisting students with physical impairment online course](#) (DoE employees only)

Contact

For further information, please contact:

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Superseded versions

- Nil

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