



# Manual tasks - assisting students with physical impairments procedure

Version: 4.2 | Version effective: 20/05/2021

## Audience

Department wide

## Purpose

This procedure provides responsibilities of departmental staff in identifying and managing risks related to manual tasks when assisting students with physical impairments and tools to document decision making at a workplace level.

## Overview

This procedure interprets the *Manual Tasks involving the Handling of People Code of Practice 2001 (People Handling Code of Practice)* and addresses risks related to these manual tasks. This procedure does not address issues related to managing aggression or physical restraint.

A 'minimum lift' approach is to be adopted at all Department of Education (department) schools. This prohibits the manual handling of all or most of a student's weight without assistance; for example mechanical aids, assistive devices. Alternative strategies are to be implemented if the student isn't able to support most of their own weight.

## Responsibilities

### Principals and Managers

- Implement a risk management approach to develop and implement safe systems of work that eliminate or minimise the risk of injury to employees, students and other persons involved in manual tasks related to assisting students including:
  - identification and management of risks is to be implemented for daily activities and foreseeable risks e.g. emergency planning
  - provision of suitable and maintained facilities/equipment identified through the risk management process
  - ensure [matching hoist and sling combinations](#) are purchased and used at the site.

- Provide relevant induction, information, instruction and training for existing employees, new employees, relief staff and volunteers outlining health and safety risks, control strategies and safe work practices.
- Ensure that appropriately trained staff are available in all contingencies.
- Ensure safe work practices are followed by staff and others.

### **Supervisors (e.g. deputy principals, heads of special education services)**

- Support the implementation of a risk management approach.
- Approve risk assessments that have a high level of risk as per the [risk assessment template](#).
- Seek specialist advice on the selection of equipment e.g. prescription of hoists and sling combinations.

### **All employees involved in manual tasks**

- Assist in identifying, assessing and managing risks associated with manual tasks related to assisting students through the completion of [risk assessments](#).
- Participate in induction and other relevant training.
- Follow safe work practices for manual tasks including use of appropriate equipment.

### **Others**

- Participate in induction and other relevant training.
- Follow safe work practices developed for manual tasks including use of appropriate equipment.

### **Physiotherapists and occupational therapists**

- Provide advice on the prescription of hoists and slings.
- Complete the [non-matching hoist and sling checklist](#) if this combination of equipment has been assessed as the only option to meet the needs of a specific student.

## **Process**

### **Supervisors**

1. Refer to flowchart – [Flowchart – Manual tasks: Assisting students with physical impairments](#) to identify relevant process.
2. Complete risk management process using relevant documents as applicable; [Risk assessment template](#), [Non-matching hoist and sling checklist](#).
3. Consult with staff, carers and other professionals when undertaking a risk management process.
4. Inform the student's parents and/or carers of the school's approach to manual tasks using template - [Information for parents](#) if required.
5. Maintain appropriate documentation including:
  - Individual plans for students including manual tasks elements; this may include initial and reassessment of student needs
  - Determination of control options e.g. risk assessments for complex transfers

- Short and long term control plans e.g. budget plans for expensive items/facility modifications
- Induction and training records
- Maintenance records of equipment and furniture.

### Principals/Managers

- Approve [risk assessments](#) that have an extreme level of risk which includes manual tasks that involve the use of [non-matching hoist and sling combinations](#).
- Approve or delegate approval for risk assessments that have a high level of risk as per the [risk assessment template](#).

### Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Hazardous manual tasks</b>	<p>Many manual tasks related to assisting students are hazardous manual tasks. A hazardous manual task is a manual task involving any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive or sustained force</li> <li>• High or sudden force</li> <li>• Repetitive movement</li> <li>• Sustained or awkward posture</li> <li>• Exposure to vibration.</li> </ul>
<b>Induction, information, instruction and training</b>	<p>Induction and/or refresher training includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the principles of risk management for people handling tasks</li> <li>• the workplace procedures for assisting students with physical impairments</li> <li>• specific techniques for individual students including use of hoists and equipment</li> <li>• what to do if a student's status changes</li> <li>• principles of safe handling</li> <li>• safe use of all mechanical aids and assistive devices e.g. stair lifts, stair climbing devices or overhead hoists</li> <li>• incident and hazard reporting systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Manual tasks related to assisting students</b>	<p>This procedure refers to any workplace activity where a student is physically moved, supported or assisted. Specifically, these manual tasks refer to workplace activities requiring the use of force by a person to hold, support, transfer (lift, lower, carry, push, pull, slide) or restrain another person. Students who may require this type of assistance range from a student who has a minor injury (e.g. a sprained ankle) to a student who has a severe physical impairment.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Principals and Managers</b>	A person who has the authority for the management of a departmental workplace, e.g. school principals, and the responsibility for, and decision making authority at, a workplace for a range of issues, such as supervision of staff, budget expenditure, facilities management.
<b>Others</b>	<p>A person other than an employee or contractor as defined as a worker under the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Qld), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking; or</li> <li>• an outworker; or</li> <li>• an apprentice or trainee; or</li> <li>• a student gaining work experience; or</li> <li>• a volunteer; or</li> <li>• a visitor</li> <li>• a parent/carer</li> <li>• a pre-service teach</li> <li>• a school student</li> <li>• a person of a prescribed class.</li> </ul>
<b>Restrain and restraint</b>	The Manual Tasks involving the Handling of People Code of Practice 2001 defines 'restraint' in the context of supporting or restricting movement 'needed as an adjunct to a people handling activity such as when transferring or assisting a [student]. It does not refer to handling aggression, where aggression is the major hazard'.

## Legislation

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Manual tasks involving the handling of people Code of Practice 2001](#)
- [Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2021](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

## Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

## Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

## Supporting information for this procedure

- Nil

## Other resources

- [Guideline – Hoist and sling compatibility](#)
- [Flowchart – Manual tasks assisting students with physical impairments](#)
- [Information for parents](#)
- [Risk assessment – Manual tasks – Assisting students with physical impairments](#)
- [Matching hoist and sling checklist](#)

## Contact

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31/12/2012

## Superseded versions

*Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.*

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