

Manual Handling Policy



Version 4.0

1.0 Purpose:

This corporate topic-based health and safety policy details the specific responsibilities for safe manual handling within Warwickshire County Council (WCC). This Policy therefore does not duplicate the general health and safety requirements as stated within the Corporate WCC Health and Safety Policy. To access this policy please refer to the health and safety intranet or school document library (refer to section 9 for details).

2.0 Objective:

The objective of this Policy is to set WCC standards for manual handling activities and thus enable all health, safety and wellbeing issues relating to manual handling activities to be adequately managed and controlled.

3.0 Warwickshire County Council Commitments:

- To avoid the need for hazardous manual handling activities so far as possible;
- Where it cannot be avoided, an assessment of risk will be undertaken;
- To reduce the risk of injury (which includes musculoskeletal symptoms) so far as possible through suitable and sufficient controls; and
- To comply with all relevant statutory requirements and, where reasonably practicable, best practice guidance

4.0 Scope

The Policy is applicable to all areas and activities of Warwickshire County Council covering WCC employees. For the purposes of this policy, manual handling includes both the movement of loads that are inanimate, such as a box or trolley, or those that are animate, such as people.

WCC recognises that there are certain emergencies or risk situations in which exceptions to this Policy may occur. A safe system of work must be planned for these situations.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities for manual handling

The arrangements section of this Policy provides more detail on how these roles and responsibilities can be implemented.

5.1 Managers (Headteachers, line managers, supervisors etc...) must:

- Avoid the need for 'hazardous manual handling' within your team activities as far as possible;
- Undertake a risk assessment, where hazardous manual handling cannot be avoided, that considers the 'task', 'individual employee', 'load', and 'environment'
- Reduce the risk of injury from any 'hazardous manual handling' through appropriate controls (this may include specific manual handling training/instruction/information, safe systems of work, provision of handling equipment, etc)
- Follow and comply with the appropriate accompanying guidance and specific procedures for the type of manual handling activity undertaken:
 - For inanimate objects – 'HSE publication 'Manual Handling at Work (INDG 143(rev3) and 'WCC's Manual Handling of Loads Risk Assessment Form'.
 - For people moving and handling activities in the People Group (including Education & Learning) - 'Guidance for the Moving and Handling of People'
 - For people moving and handling activities in Specialist Transport Operations – service specific training, arrangements and procedures are in place.
- Seek advice for employees with musculoskeletal symptoms that may be caused/exacerbated by work activities. Advice can be sought from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service (healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk or 01926 476803) as some workplace adjustments may be required, or referral to Occupational Health may be required;
- Refer employees to Occupational Health who have been absent from work with a musculoskeletal problem for more than 20 working days (i.e. long term absence), however, consideration should be given to each musculoskeletal concern as an earlier referral may be beneficial. Liaise with HR Advisory Service accordingly;
- Ensure, where 'handling equipment/aids' are provided/used they must be suitable for the purpose they are provided for, and ensure that it is visually inspected, maintained / tested as required (for example, if it is load bearing it must be inspected annually by a competent person, and if person bearing it must be inspected 6 monthly);
- Provide general indications and, where it is reasonably practicable to do so, precise information on the weight of each load, and the heaviest side of any load whose centre of gravity is not positioned centrally.

5.2 Employees must:

- Follow systems of work and defined procedures in place for their safety;
- Use equipment provided for their safety properly;
- Cooperate with their line manager on health and safety matters including controls put in place (e.g. attend/follow training provided) to protect them against manual handling risk(s);
- Inform their line manager if they identify hazardous handling activities;

- Inform their manager about any physical health conditions suffered which may affect their ability to undertake manual handling safely (such as, back injury, pregnancy, etc) so that the risks can be assessed;
- Take care to make sure their activities do not put others at risk.
- Be aware of their own capabilities.

5.3 Corporate Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service will:

- Provide professional advice and awareness information on manual handling as outlined in the arrangements section of this Policy;
- Provide/ or advise on manual handling training requirements as appropriate.

5.4 Occupational Health will:

- Carry out screening / assessments regarding an individual's fitness to carry out manual handling at pre-employment/Work Health Questionnaire or following referral due to an identified musculoskeletal problem or sickness absence due to an injury / accident.
- Work in conjunction with Human Resources and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service to ensure the safe return to work of an individual as per WCC Sickness Absence Policy.

6.0 Organisational Arrangements

6.1 Assessment of risk for manual handling

6.1.1 Identifying hazardous manual handling

Within WCC it is likely that all employees will undertake a manual handling activity at some point. If employees are undertaking manual handling activities on a low risk/ad hoc basis, then these should be considered as part of the normal activity risk assessment process.

However, if manual handling activities are an integral part of an employee's job and it is undertaken on a regular and frequent basis (i.e. daily/weekly), then this is hazardous manual handling (refer also to the 'Glossary' for further detail). The risk factors that make it hazardous handling relate to the task, load, environment, and the individual.

- **For loads that are inanimate (e.g. table, box)** the initial assessment 'Section A' on the **WCC manual handling of loads risk assessment form** should be completed for all activities involving the transportation of inanimate loads. This will determine whether a detailed specific assessment is required (Section B and C). If managers are unsure, then a detailed specific assessment should be completed as best practice. Further advice and assistance can be obtained from the WCC Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

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- **For loads that are animate (e.g. moving and handling of people)** the relevant guidance and specific procedures for people moving and handling activities as referred to in section 5.1 should be followed and adhered to.

6.1.2 Assessing hazardous manual handling

Where hazardous manual handling cannot be avoided then an assessment of risk (as per 6.1.1 above) must be undertaken so that risks can be eliminated, reduced or adequately managed/ controlled. For inanimate objects use the **WCC manual handling of loads risk assessment form** and for animate loads refer to the specific people handling guidance for the assessment tool to follow.

The WCC risk assessment process has been structured to consider the following factors:

- **Task;** the specific task that is being undertaken or needs to be undertaken.
- **Individual capability;** the person carrying out the task and their ability to be able to manage it safely, considering any health/medical conditions etc.
- **Load;** the item being moved, e.g. table or box or physically assisting the movement of a person.
- **Environment;** the environment the task will take place in, considering lighting, flooring, space, furniture/equipment, noise etc.
- **Other factors,** for example, pregnancy, use of protective clothing, and work organisation (i.e psychosocial factors – refer to appendix).

The emphasis given to each of these factors may depend in part on the nature and circumstances of the manual handling operations. Refer to the following sections for information that is relevant to the manual handling activity undertaken.

6.1.2.1 Inanimate object manual handling

Refer to the HSE Publication '[Manual Handling at Work](#)' (INDG 143(rev3) for guidance on the manual handling of inanimate objects. WCC has produced the 'WCC Manual Handling of Loads Risk Assessment Form' for you to complete accordingly (refer to 6.1.1).

6.1.2.2 People moving and handling risk assessment

For further information on the risk assessment process for people moving and handling activities, refer to the following:

- For people moving and handling activities in the People Group (including Education & Learning) - 'Guidance for the Moving and Handling of People'
- For people moving and handling activities in Specialist Transport Operations, refer to the service specific training, arrangements and procedures.

6.2 Training and Competency

Specific information, instruction and training needs are identified through the risk assessment process and through a training needs analysis. Once identified, the relevant training is therefore a mandatory requirement for all employees undertaking that activity.

For employees undertaking hazardous manual handling activities, managers should contact the WCC Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service for further advice on the appropriate training required. Attendance may be required on the WCC manual handling inanimate objects training session; or a specific course may be required, e.g. people moving and handling.

7.0 Equality and Accessibility Information

- If this information is difficult to understand, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service can provide it in another format, for example Braille, in large print, on audiotape or another language.
- A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this Policy.

8.0 Contact Information

All health, safety and wellbeing information is available on the intranet. Go to Intranet > HR > Health, Safety and Wellbeing

For Schools, refer to the health and safety document library on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSdocs

Alternatively you can contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service on healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk or call 01926 476803.

Glossary

The key terms used within this Policy are outlined below:

Manual Handling

- Is the transporting or supporting of a load, including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving by hand or bodily force.
- Loads can be inanimate (e.g. table, box) or those that are animate (e.g. people or animals).
- The term manual handling therefore relates to the movement of a load by human effort, as opposed to mechanical handling by crane, lift trucks etc. The human effort may be applied directly to the load, or indirectly by hauling on a rope or pulling on a lever. Introducing mechanical assistance, for example a sack truck or a powered hoist, may reduce but not eliminate manual handling since human effort is still required to move, steady or position the load.
- It also includes physically assisting the movement of people including adults and children, particularly those with restricted mobility or a disability.

Hazardous Manual Handling

- Is an activity that is known or likely to injure those attempting that activity (for example, there is a significant risk associated with the activity).
- For example, manual handling relates to the moving of items or people either by lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing or pulling. But it's not just a case of 'pulling something' due to its weight, although this can be a cause of injury. Injuries can be caused because of the amount of times you have to pick up or carry a load, the distance you are carrying it, the height you are picking it up from or putting it down at (picking it up from the floor, putting it on a shelf above shoulder level) and any twisting, bending stretching or other awkward posture you may get in whilst doing a task. The risk factors that make it hazardous handling relate to the task, load, environment, and the individual.
- Within WCC an easy way to identify whether an activity is hazardous manual handling, is to classify whether manual handling is an integral part of the job and it is undertaken on a regular and frequent basis (i.e. daily/weekly).

Load

- A load in this context must be a specific item that needs to be moved. This includes, for example, not only packages and boxes, but also material that is being supported, as well as the moving and handling of people or animals.

Musculoskeletal Symptoms

- Relates to any pain or disorders that occur in the neck, shoulders and arms (Upper Limbs), back, or hips knees and ankles and feet (Lower Limbs).

Handling Equipment/Aids

- Through risk assessment the provision and use of handling equipment/aids may be identified as a control. For example, these may be sack trucks, trolleys, passenger lifts, hoists, slings, tail lifts, etc. When selecting these items they must be suitable for the purpose and undergo the required inspection, testing and examination regime. Please note, this does not relate to other equipment used in the workplace/ for that specific activity (i.e. chainsaws when handling those for forestry work).

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Psychosocial Risk Factors

- Are things that may affect workers' psychological response to their work and workplace conditions (including working relationships with supervisors and colleagues). Examples are: high workloads, tight deadlines, and lack of control of the work and working methods. Psychosocial risk factors can lead to musculoskeletal disorders.