

Manual Handling

Relevant Legislation and Documents

OSH Code of Practice for Manual Handling

Manual handling not undertaken effectively or in a safe manner is the single biggest cause of ACC claimant's injuries in New Zealand. Do not under estimate the damage that can be done, sometimes long term, through improper manual handling.

No person should be required to lift more than they are capable of lifting on the day.

There are 18 risk factors in the Manual Handling of items and weight is only one. Other considerations include movements and posture required, layout of the workplace, actual handling task, exposure to the task, task requirements and object characteristics (weight, dimensions, grip, what the load is), the work environment and individual work factors.

Where possible, mechanical lifting devices should be used to move anything heavy or awkward. Always ensure the pathway is clear prior to moving anything.

Guidelines

For loads that can be carried by the individual:

- 1) Stand as close to the load as possible with feet apart for good balance, bending your knees and straddling the load.
- 2) Always try to lift when standing or at least half squatting rather than kneeling or not using your legs.
- 3) Keep your back as straight as possible whilst lifting and carrying.
- 4) Always keep the load as close as possible to your body, with elbows close to your sides making sure you can see where you are going.
- 5) Do not twist your body to change direction, use your feet.

Team Lifts:

- 1) Ensure one person is in charge during a team lift.
- 2) Where possible, ensure members of a team lift are of similar height.
- 3) Position people for the lift having regard to the size, shape and balance of the load.

The risk assessment for the production or event should incorporate all manual handling activities including set transportation, storage, installation and removal.