



Manual Handling – Policy and Procedure

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Manual Handling

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To introduce a concise policy and procedure to support staff undertaking manual handling activities and ensure that Dorset Council has a consistent approach to the management of the risks associated with manual handling.
- 1.2 This policy will apply to all work activities involving manual handling across the Council. Individual Directorates or sections may need to supplement this policy with specific guidance relating to their areas of service provision, particularly those who are involved in known high risk activities such as the manual handling of people or machinery.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure applies to all Dorset Council employees. All school governing bodies will be encouraged to adopt this or a similar policy by which their staff may also be protected and supported. This recognises the joint responsibility of Governors and Dorset Council for the health, safety and welfare of all staff employed in schools.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The transporting or supporting of loads by human force (known as manual handling) is associated with more than a third of all injuries reported to the Health and Safety Executive each year. The most common injuries are sprains or strains, often of the back and which can take prolonged periods for recovery to take place. This highlights the importance of good manual handling practices, which will serve to prevent these longer-term injuries arising.
- 2.2 Many injuries are cumulative in that they result from a series of events or incidents rather than being the result of a single accident.
- 2.3 To promote good practice, it is necessary to develop safe systems of work for all staff. This concerns not only the practical responses to situations where manual handling is required but also to the recognition of situations which might prove hazardous.

3. The Legal Framework

- 3.1 The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 augment existing legislation, principally the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; and can be linked to the 'risk assessment' requirement in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 3.2 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This requires employers to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of staff and applies to all work activities.

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions. They also have a duty to co-operate and comply with their employer on health and safety matters.

3.3 Risk Assessment

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires the employer to "make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work". Further guidance on risk assessment in the

wider context and generic risk assessment proforma can be found in Dorset Council's Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure.

3.4 Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHO) 1992 (as amended)

These regulations are aimed at improving the safety of all staff involved in manual handling by ensuring that all such operations are properly assessed, that risks are identified, and measures taken to reduce those risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

The definition of manual handling from the MHO is:

"any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force."

4. The Policy

4.1 Dorset Council fully recognises its responsibilities towards the health, safety and welfare of its employees and is committed to promoting and supporting safe working practices for all manual handling activities.

4.2 Dorset Council will ensure that:

- Managers and/or designated staff conduct assessments of the risks to the health, safety and welfare of staff caused by carrying out manual handling activities. A 'Manual Handling Assessment Checklist' is attached to this policy at Appendix A and should be used to identify the specific aspects of manual handling that can cause harm.
- Managers and/or designated staff introduce, implement and monitor any control measures required as a result of the risk assessment.
- Findings and outcomes of manual handling risk assessments are recorded and made available to staff carrying out those duties.
- Appropriate levels of information, instruction, training and support are provided as is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees who are involved in manual handling activities and to enable manual handling risk assessments to be carried out.
- Staff carrying out activities involving manual handling are able to request advice and assistance if they feel it is beyond their physical ability.
- Competent persons are available to assist managers in fulfilling their health, safety and welfare obligations.

5. Manual Handling Risk Assessment

5.1 In simple terms, risk assessment is thinking about what could go wrong and deciding if enough has been done to prevent it.

5.2 An assessment of ALL manual handling activities applying to both inanimate and animate loads must be made to identify: -

- Whether there is any associated risk of injury and if so;
- Whether the operation be avoided, automated or mechanised.

Where it is not possible or practicable to avoid manual handling, a more detailed assessment of the operation required must be carried out.

- The areas examined under the assessment will include:
- the nature of the task itself;
- the characteristics of the load involved;
- the work environment;
- the individual capacity of the employee concerned.

All such assessments must be recorded.

- 5.3 There is also a requirement to review and revise as necessary, any manual handling risk assessment if: -
- There is a reason to suspect the assessment is no longer valid;
 - There has been a significant change in matters to which the assessment relates.
- 5.4 A 'Manual Handling Assessment Checklist' is attached at Appendix A to this document and available in pad form and has been designed for use when making the initial assessment. It should be completed in conjunction with the guidance notes.
- 5.5 The ways in which risks can be reduced should be identified and appropriate action taken. Where risks cannot be reduced to a reasonable level, reference should be made to the appropriate manager and/or a member of Dorset Council's Health and Safety Team for guidance.

6. Key Management and Staff Responsibilities

Managers and all Dorset Council employees are responsible for the following:

- 6.1 To ensure that this policy and procedure is fully implemented.
- 6.2 To identify hazards relating to manual handling and carry out risk assessments using the 'Manual Handling Assessment Checklist' (Appendix A) and associated guidance notes, (Appendix B).
- 6.3 Involve staff and users of their service as appropriate in the risk assessment process.
- 6.4 Take appropriate action to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe working environment with particular regard for manual handling.
- 6.5 Make full and proper use of any equipment provided, or system of work defined for their safety.
- 6.6 Report to their manager any failure or deterioration of equipment or any difficulty in following the defined system of work.
- 6.7 Where a particular manual handling operation is likely to leave an unacceptable degree of risk of injury and all feasible alternatives have been considered, the manager should make the decision not to continue with the existing arrangements.
- 6.8 Share risk assessment information with other agencies involved in handling operations alongside or in parallel with Dorset Council staff. Each employer retains responsibility for the assessment of activities involving their staff but should ensure that all relevant information is shared. This is particularly relevant in situations where service users/pupils are moved by staff alongside and/or in partnership with other agencies.
- 6.9 Review risk assessments and re-assess if circumstances have changed or if the process needs to change in the light of experience.

7. Learning and Development

- 7.1 Managers should ensure that staff carrying out manual handling activities have been given the appropriate level of training, advice and guidance to enable them to do it safely.

7.2 The learning should include the following as a minimum requirement: -

- How to recognise potentially harmful manual handling
- Appropriate safe systems of work
- Use of mechanical aids
- Good posture and handling techniques
- Reporting procedures if things go wrong

7.3 Managers and/or designated staff carrying out the risk assessments of manual handling activities should ensure they are familiar with the process and responsibilities within this policy and relevant legislation. Further advice, guidance and training is available from Dorset Council's Health and Safety team.

8. Review

8.1 This policy and procedure will be regularly monitored for effectiveness by the **Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Committee** and reviewed in line with Dorset Council's commitment to continuous improvement.