

Manual Handling Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

Most work roles involve performing some type of manual task using the body to move or hold objects, people or animals. Manual tasks include stacking shelves, cleaning, gardening, moving people and entering data into a computer.

Manual handling is any activity that requires effort, e.g. lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, supporting, carrying and moving loads by hand or bodily force. Some manual tasks are hazardous and may cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). These are the most common workplace injuries across Australia.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations* provide a framework for safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of those who participate in manual handling activities.

This document is a guide for staff to ensure safe manual handling practices. All workers are responsible for following the steps in this procedure for any manual handling activity. The procedure should be read in conjunction with the Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure.

2.0 Scope

2.1 Organisation

121 Supports Hunter Pty Ltd is responsible for ensuring that manual handling practices are current and that best practice information is provided to staff regarding managing the risk of musculoskeletal injuries associated with hazardous manual tasks. 121 Supports Hunter Pty Ltd takes all reasonable steps to use appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks in our organisation caused by hazardous manual tasks.

2.2 Staff

Staff and participants must take reasonable care of their health and safety and not adversely affect the health and safety of others. Staff must comply with any reasonable instructions, as far as they can, and must cooperate with any reasonable health and safety policies or procedures that they have been provided by 121 Supports Hunter Pty Ltd to mitigate risk.

3.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Manual handling	Any activity involves lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures or repetitive movements.
Hazardous manual task	A task requiring a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following: • repetitive or sustained force • a high or sudden force • repetitive movement • sustained or awkward posture • exposure to vibration. These hazards directly stress the body and may lead to an injury.
Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)	An MSD may include: • sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons • back injuries, including damage to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, spinal discs, nerves, joints and bones • joint and bone injuries or degeneration, including injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, hands and feet • nerve injuries or compression (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome) • muscular and vascular disorders as a result of hand-arm vibration • soft tissue injuries, including hernias • chronic pain. An MSD can occur in two ways, including: • gradual wear and tear to joints, ligaments, muscles and intervertebral discs caused by repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions • sudden damage caused by strenuous activity or unexpected movements such as when loads being handled move or change position suddenly • Injuries can also occur due to a combination of the above mechanisms.

Workplace	Any place where work is carried out for a business and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work, including a participant's home.
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4.0 Policy

121 Supports Hunter Pty Ltd will manage risks to health and safety relating to a musculoskeletal disorder associated with hazardous manual tasks by following the recommendations of SafeWork Australia's Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practices.

A Work Health and Safety Officer, delegated by the Director, will manage risks to:

- identify and assess reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to manual handling risk
- eliminate the risk, as far as is reasonably practicable
- minimise the risk, as far as is reasonably practicable, by implementing control measures (e.g. use of appropriate mechanical aids, the provision of training, support and communication with all who may be exposed to the risks and hazards)
- maintain the implemented control measure so it remains effective
- review, and if necessary, revise risk control measures to maintain a work environment without risks to health and safety, as far as practicable.

121 Supports Hunter Pty Ltd will ensure it provides:

- appropriate equipment and related training that promotes safe manual handling practices
- education specific to manual handling on an annual basis to guarantee staff knowledge is up to date and in line with the current safe work standards
- induction training and instruction to workers that are suitable and adequate for their work role, incorporating:
 - the nature of the work carried out
 - the nature of the risks associated with the work at the time of the information, training and instruction
- control measures implemented
- review and monitor the manual handling practices of employees who directly and actively participate in the delivery of care to participants
- assessment of participants for manual handling risks and where risks are identified, ensure these are documented in their clinical record, as well as procedures/practices to be carried out to reduce the risk (to be undertaken upon initial assessment of the client and in the home risk assessment procedures)
- support for consultative and collaborative improvement processes regarding safe manual handling
- annual reviews of the individual participant that include the assessment of equipment or processes relating to manual handling to ensure that these are still valid

- carry out reassessment immediately if there are changes in the participant's condition that may alter the work environment concerning manual handling
- investigate all incidents and accidents which result in physical or musculoskeletal injury to employees
- review risk assessments and systems of work in light of any incidents
- report all incidents and complete the Incident Investigation Form as soon as practical.

Our staff will ensure they take personal responsibility for reducing the potential risk of injury to themselves, participants and others by:

- understanding the principles of manual handling and being able to identify potential hazardous risks
- familiarising themselves with the Safe Work Australia Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice
- consistently using safe work practices when undertaking any manual handling activity, following the manufacturer's operational instructions on the use of equipment and procedures documented in the participant's notes relating to specific manual handling
- adhering to our organisation's policies and procedures regarding manual handling as outlined in this policy and the following procedures.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Managing manual handling risks

All new staff undertake work health and safety training and are provided with relevant documentation at their induction/orientation. The Staff Induction Checklist records this.

New staff will be assessed for their competency in manual handling on their initial buddy shift/s and any later shift observations.

All staff will be provided annual refresher training in manual handling relevant to their role, as per mandatory training outlined in the Staff Development Policy and Procedure. This will be completed annually through the NDS Etrainu Platform

5.2 Participant care procedures

Participant assessment, planning and ongoing revision will include:

- an initial assessment of manual handling risks and appropriate control strategies, documented in the Participant Initial Assessment Form
- notes of manual handling risks in the Risk Assessment Form
- ongoing assessment of manual handling risks and strategies annually or as required.

5.3 Continuous improvement procedures

The Quality and Risk Committee will:

- ensure all musculoskeletal injuries are investigated
- review policies and procedures in the light of such incidents
- enter review and outcomes in the Incident Register and Continuous Improvement Register
- periodically review all employee incidents to identify musculoskeletal injuries and manual handling patterns.

5.4 Employee procedures

Employees are expected to:

- take part in all training and assessment provided concerning manual handling
- adhere to manual handling policies and procedures
- consult with all key persons to reduce manual handling risks, i.e. participant, family, carer, management and allied health professionals
- use and operate equipment following manufacturer instructions and only for its intended use
- report to the General Manager as soon as possible:
 - potential hazards and faulty equipment (e.g. commode chair difficult to manoeuvre, malfunctioning hoist batteries, frayed/worn slings, harnesses and broken buckles)
 - incident/accident, injury or dangerous occurrence relating to manual handling
 - changes in the participant's condition and environment may increase the risk of injury from manual handling issues.

5.5 Risk management process for manual tasks

IDENTIFY	What is the manual task? Using the body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing. Is the manual task hazardous?				CONSULT
	Application of force:	Posture:	Movement:	Exposure to vibration	
	- repetitive - sustained - high - sudden	- sustained - awkward	- repetitive		
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ASSESS	What is the risk of MSD? - How often and how long are specific postures, movements or forces performed or held? - What is the duration of the task? - Does the task involve high or sudden force? - Does the task involve vibration?				CONSULT
	What is the source of risk?				
	Work area design and layout	Systems of work	Nature, size, weight and number of persons, animals or things handled	Work environment	
					
CONTROL	Is the task necessary? - Can the source of risk (work area layout, environment, etc.) be changed? - Can mechanical aids be used to perform the task? - What training is needed to support the control measures?				CONSULT
					
REVIEW	Conduct a review: - when the control measure is no longer effective - before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control - if the new hazard or risk is identified - if consultation results indicate that a review is necessary - if a health and safety representative at the workplace requests a review.				CONSULT

6.0 Related documents

- Incident Report
- 121 Incident Investigation Form Report
- 121 Incident Register
- 121 Continuous Improvement Register

- 121 Staff Induction Checklist
- 121 Risk Assessment Form
- 121 Risk Management Plan
- 121 Risk Register
- 121 Hazard Report Form
- 121 Employee Training Plan Record
- 121 Employee Training Register
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure

7.0 References

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2019 (Commonwealth)
- SafeWork Australia - Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practices