

1.0 Objective

To prescribe the minimum requirements for the safe execution of Hazardous Manual Handling Tasks at RMIT, to reduce, as far as reasonably practicable, the risks associated with those tasks, thereby protecting our staff, contractors and students from potential harm.

2.0 Scope

This process applies to all RMIT Staff, Students and Contractors.

3.0 What must go Right?

Should this Process be implemented appropriately by RMIT, the expected outcomes – known as ‘what must go right’ – will be that:

- All leaders, staff, students and contractors are aware of the long-term consequences of manual handling risks, and are appropriately informed so that they can actively participate in reducing the risks.
- Any tasks that may present a manual handling risk are identified by the person assigned to carry out the task and/or by their Operational Leader, and appropriately assessed and controlled.
- All staff, students and contractors who conduct hazardous manual tasks have been trained in manual handling and safe lifting techniques, and have been consulted about the controls in place for the particular tasks.

‘What must go right’ outcomes are key measures of success and the designed goal state.

4.0 Implementation

4.1. Hazard Identification

Operational leaders must consult with staff, students and contractors in order to identify all hazardous manual handling tasks within the work and learning environment. In all instances the Operational Leader must record the identified manual handling hazards using *HSW-PR34-FR01 Hazardous Manual Handling Task Identification Worksheet*.

Hazardous manual handling tasks may be identified when:

- Planning, designing, renovating, constructing work areas and facilities
- A new task is introduced into a staff members job
- Observation of manual handling tasks
- New plant or equipment is introduced
- Workstations or the work and learning environment is changed
- New or additional information relating to hazardous manual handling becomes available
- Consulting with staff, contractors and/or students performing manual handling tasks
- An incident, injury or near miss is reported in the work and learning environment

Hazard identification may be carried out for a group of tasks rather than for individual tasks if all the tasks in the group are similar and does not result in the person being subject to any greater, additional or different risk.

Where practicable, manual handling risks will be identified and controlled during the planning, design or at purchase.

When identifying manual handling hazards the following should be considered:

Posture / Actions: Postures used and actions performed can place increased pressures on the spine. Bending forward, bending sideways or twisting, one handed carrying, uneven lifting, loads above shoulder, awkward shapes, jerky movements all increase the risk of injury.

Weight / Force: Weight and force can place a high stress on an individual. If a load is difficult to pull, push, slide or lift then it is a hazard.

Duration / Frequency: The duration and frequency of a task can have a significant impact on the risk of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) even for lightweight materials handling.

Work Environment: Risk factors - Slippery floors, wet floors, uneven floors, rough ground, cluttered untidy workspaces, stressful conditions i.e., extreme heat or cold.

Weight: Weight of objects being manually handled should be considered. There is no maximum weight rule applied for manual handling; however the risk of MSD rises significantly as the weight increases.

Hand-arm Vibration: Exposure to hand–arm vibration can result in MSD. The use of any vibrating hand tools and other vibrating equipment should be considered when identifying manual handling hazards.

Whole Body Vibration: Exposure to whole body vibration can result in MSD. Vibration during the operation of mobile equipment as well as in other sitting and standing operations should be considered.

Clothing: It is important the correct clothes and footwear are worn for the job. Clothing risks include: Tight clothing; Shoes with slippery soles, or rigid soles; poorly fitted gloves or gloves not suited to the activity.

Skills, Experience and Age: Inexperienced, untrained and unskilled members of staff will be at greater risk of injury. In general, younger staff members are at greater risk because they are still developing physically.

4.2. Risk Assessment

The Operational Leader is to conduct a risk assessment for each hazardous manual handling task identified in the work and learning environment. All risk assessments are to be conducted in consultation with the relevant staff, student, contractor and/or member of the HSW team. The risk assessment is to be documented using *HSW-PR09-TM04 Hazardous Manual Handling Risk Assessment Template*.

Risk assessment of hazardous manual tasks is to include examination of the following risk factors:

- The postures, movements and forces required to carry out the task
- The duration and frequency of the task
- Environmental factors that act directly on a person carrying out the task including heat, cold, vibration, humidity and wind
- Systems of work or the way the work is organised and will determine of the sources of risk.

The following method (TILE) may be used for simple hazard identification and assessment of manual handling tasks. This assessment method is not intended to replace the formal risk assessment, rather it provides a simple tool for manual handling task decision making and may be useful in supporting the formal hazard identification and risk assessment processes.

The TILE method is used to assess manual handling tasks taking into consideration the Task, the Individual, the Load and the Environment as follows:

Task	Individual capability	Load	Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the task have to be done manually • Can it be done another way • Is there a safe system of work • Are there high risk movements involved • Does the task involve carrying or moving over a distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength, height and fitness appropriate to the task • Trained for the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the load be moved without straining • Consider shape of load • Is there sharp edges • Is it slippery, hot or cold • Is assistance required • Is PPE required e.g. gloves for grip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the workplace layout be reorganised to reduce risk • Is there enough space to carry out the task • Is the floor uneven, slippery or unstable • Is the necessary equipment available and in good working order • Is the furniture adjustable or easily moved if required • Is there adequate lighting to complete the task safely

4.3. Risk Control

If the risk assessment identifies there is a potential for injury the Operational Leader in consultation with staff, contractors and/or students must eliminate or control these hazards.

When determining risk controls to reduce manual handling risks, the Operational Leader must follow the hierarchy of control outlined in *HSW-PR09 Risk Management*. Controls (if elimination is not possible) are most effective when combined, for example, providing a trolley for a particular task, combined with providing training for the persons carrying out the task.

The hierarchy of controls outlines the steps that must be taken to eliminate or control hazards:

Examples of effective manual handling controls (from most to least effective) could include:

- **Eliminating hazards** is the most effective way to make the workplace safer. However, this is not always practical. To minimise risk:
 - **Substitute** – substitute the hazard with another of lower risk e.g. use 5 kg boxes of goods instead of 10 kg boxes of goods.
 - **Isolate** – isolate the hazard from the person put at risk.
 - **Engineering** – minimise the risk by improving design and layout of the work and learning environment e.g. provide adjustable workstations and benches to avoid unnecessary reaching or bending.
 - **Administration** – minimise the risk by administrative means e.g. introduce job rotation, train employees in safe lifting techniques.
 - **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** – provide PPE e.g. non-slip footwear to prevent slips, trips and falls while performing manual handling activities.

If no single measure can control the risk use a combination of controls.

4.3.1. Control considerations

When implementing controls, the following should be considered:

- Before purchasing equipment such as tools, containers, workstations, machinery and vehicles, always check whether the item has been designed so that it can be used safely and best matches the needs of the staff, students or contractors who will be using it.
- Workstation should be designed to allow people to work in an upright position, shoulders relaxed in a natural position and upper arms close to the trunk most of the time without large reaches to perform the task. Adjustable workstations are the best option.
- Appropriate working heights should be considered in relation to the task performed, e.g. tasks with high visual demands should be performed above elbow height, and possibly with a tilted work surface, whereas light manipulative tasks or tasks involving the use of a keyboard should be performed just below elbow height.
- Change the nature, size, weight or number of items handled to reduce the risk of MSDs
- Ensure hand tools are designed ergonomically and well maintained
- Use mechanical aids where possible such as conveyors, cranes, hoists, loading dock levellers, turntables, springs or gas struts, forklifts, lift tables, trolleys etc.
- Reduce force required for push/pull actions by using motorised equipment, positioning trolleys with wheels in direction of travel, treating floor surfaces to reduce resistance, etc.
- Improve task design, change the workload and pace of work to reduce risk

4.3.2. Safe Work Procedures

After the risk assessment is complete and the controls agreed upon with staff, develop a work instruction using *HSW-PR01-TM04 Work Instruction Template* and arrange appropriate training.

Safe work procedures are to be developed by the Operational Leader and relevant designated work group in consultation with a Senior Adviser, Health and Safety.

If it is not reasonably practical to eliminate a risk arising from manual handling the risk must be controlled by:

- modifying the design – redesign the work activity, changing the objects to be handled or the work environment
- providing mechanical aids – provide equipment or make arrangements for team lifting (team lifting should be the last alternative)
- training – ensure those carrying out the activity are appropriately trained in safe lifting techniques, correct use of equipment and team lifting

4.3.3. Information, Instruction and Training

Operational Leaders are responsible for ensuring that manual handling information, instruction and training is conducted with staff who:

- Carry out manual handling tasks
- Supervise or direct work involving manual handling
- Select and purchase tools and equipment to be used in manual handling tasks
- Design manual handling tasks or systems of work, or the layout of a work and learning environment where manual handling is carried out
- Are involved in identifying hazardous manual handling and the assessment and control of musculoskeletal risks

For staff, students or contractors exposed to hazardous manual handling tasks, the Operational Leader is to make sure appropriate training is provided for safe manual handling and lifting techniques. This training is to include:

- The process for identifying and assessing and controlling risk associated with hazardous manual handling
- The measures in place to control the risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)
- The different factors that contribute to manual handling hazards
- Controlling manual handling hazards
- Safe lifting techniques

- Incident reporting

Records of this training are to be recorded and maintained by the Operational Leader in line with *HSW-PR04 Records Management*.

4.4. Reviewing of Risk Control Measures

The Operational Leader is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of risk controls in consultation with staff, students, contractors and/or the HSW Team. This review is to be documented in *HSW PR09-TM04 Hazardous Manual Handling Risk Assessment Template*.

Control measures in place must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised:

- Prior to any alteration to any objects used or to systems of work
- Prior to an object being used for another purpose other than for which it was designed
- If new or additional information becomes available
- If an MSD is reported
- In relation to any incident notifiable to the Regulator
- Where for any reason the measures do not adequately control risk
- Following a request from a Health and Safety Representative

Other methods and forums for periodic review and consultation include but are not limited to:

- Direct discussions with relevant staff / groups
- Staff meetings
- Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meetings
- Reviewing risk assessments and / or safe work procedures
- Investigating manual handling incidents

5.0 Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Executive Leaders	<p>Ensure there are resources available to implement this process in their area of control</p> <p>Review performance indicators on a regular basis</p>
Operational Leaders	<p>Implement this process in their area of control</p> <p>Consult with HSW team, staff, contractors and students in relation to identifying hazardous manual handling tasks and assessing and controlling associated risks</p> <p>Ensure all hazardous manual tasks are identified and appropriately risk assessed</p> <p>Ensure risks associated with identified hazardous manual tasks are controlled</p> <p>Maintain records related to hazardous manual handling identification, risk assessment and risk control, including training records</p> <p>Ensure staff, contractors and students are appropriately trained in this process and the processes related to the hazardous manual tasks under their control</p> <p>Ensure manual handling requirements are communicated to all staff, contractors and students</p> <p>Monitor and review implemented risk controls</p> <p>Monitor compliance with this process and report on outcome</p>
Staff, students and contractors	<p>Undertake relevant manual handling training</p> <p>Report tasks that may involve hazardous manual handling</p> <p>Assist in assessing and controlling the risks of hazardous manual tasks</p> <p>Follow this process and all reasonable instructions relating to HSW and manual handling</p> <p>Comply with measures implemented to control risk associated with hazardous manual tasks.</p>
Visitors	<p>Comply with the requirements of induction</p> <p>Undertake training where required</p> <p>Comply with all safety rules and instruction</p>

	Facilitate hazardous manual task risk assessments where required
HSW Team	Regularly review this process in consultation with relevant staff members
	Develop and report on KPIs relevant to this process
	Monitor compliance with this process and report on outcomes

6.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
DWG	Designated Work Group: A group of employees of the employer at one or more workplaces. The particulars of the DWG are determined by negotiation between the employer and the employees and should take into account the number of employees, the location and the types of activities conducted in the workplace. A DWG is formed for the purpose of electing a HSR.
Senior Leaders	Heads of School, Deans, Senior Managers
Hazardous Manual Handling	Any manual handling activity that has any of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive or sustained force • High or sudden force • Repetitive movement • Sustained or awkward posture • Exposure to vibration
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
HSR	Health and Safety Representative: An employee who is a member of the DWG and elected by its members to represent them in relation to health and safety matters, risks, or concerns.
HSW	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Manual Handling	Any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object, person or animal
Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD)	An injury, illness or disease of the musculoskeletal system affecting the muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments, intervertebral discs or nerves that arises in whole or in part from manual handling in the workplace, whether occurring suddenly or over a prolonged period of time but does not include an injury, illness or disease that is caused by crushing, entrapment or cut resulting primarily from

the mechanical operation of plant.

Operational Leaders	Line Managers, supervisors
Reasonably practicable	<p>Regard must be had to the following matters in determining what is (or was at a particular time) reasonably practicable in relation to ensuring health and safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned eventuating; • The degree of harm that would result if the hazard or risk eventuated; • What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk and any ways of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk; • The availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or reduce the hazard or risk; and • The cost of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk.

7.0 Supporting Documents

Document Number	Document Name
HSW-PR09	Risk Management
HSW-PR04	Records Management
HSW-PR09-TM04	Hazardous Manual Handling Risk Assessment Template
HSW-PR34-FR01	Hazardous Manual Handling Task Identification Worksheet
HSW-PR01-TM04	Work Instruction Template

8.0 Revision

Rev No.	Issue Date	Nature of Amendment	Page No(s)	Author	Department
2.0	27/11/2017	GSM update and review	All	HSW Team	HSW Team