

Manual Handling: Current Strategies at Workplace Level

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- Manual Handling Defined:

“ Any transporting or supporting of a load by one or more employees which includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving a load, **which by reason of its characteristics or unfavourable ergonomic conditions,** involves risk”



Physical effort too strenuous

Difficult to grasp

Load is too heavy

Load is too large



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- Manual Handling
 - It is conducted by a person at work
 - It normally involves the handling of a load,
 - It requires the person to move a load from one place to another and may involve risk
 - Four key constituents:
 - **The person**
 - **The load**
 - **The activity and the environment**





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The Manual Handling of Load regulations 2007

- Key focus of the regulation is on prevention of injury through:
 - Risk assessment of systems of work which involve manual handling
 - Avoidance of Manual Handling
 - Reduction of Manual Handling





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- Manual Handling
 - It is more than a phrase in a Safety Statement or Risk Assessment
 - It cannot be addressed without looking at work activity
 - It will not be managed through a one size fits all “Provision of Training” Intervention

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- Injury and illness due to manual handling – The Statistics?
 - 35 manual handling injury claims cost € 2.9 Million (*Manual Handling Incidents in the Health Care Sector, 2007*)
 - 25% (3,700 claims approximately) relate to injuries to the back, disc, muscle spasm or strain (*Occupational Injury Benefit Claims 2010*)

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- Injury and illness due to manual handling – The Statistics?
 - Manual Handling continues to be the most common accident trigger accounting for 25% of all reported non-fatal accidents in 2009 (*Summary of Workplace Injury, Illness and Fatality Statistics 2008-2009*)

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- Injury and illness due to manual handling – The Statistics?
 - €31.4 million awarded in respect of 972 Employer Liability claims for workplace accidents in 2008. A review of the types of injuries sustained indicate that 42% of victims suffered sprain injuries. (Injuries Board Annual Report 2009)

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- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A. Approach: Main Elements
 - Element 1: Guidance Development: Risk Assessment focused
 - On line Risk Assessment Case Studies
 - Sector Specific Manual Handling Risk Assessment Guides for Retail, Hospitality and Healthcare Sectors
 - Guides planned 2012 for Manufacturing and Construction sector

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- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A. Approach: Main Elements:
 - Element 2: New Manual Handling Training System
 - New FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling Instructor Standards published – March 2010
 - Validation of new FETAC Level 6 Training Programmes – October 2010
 - Recognition of Prior Learning Process – May 2011

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- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A. Approach: Main Elements:
 - Element 3: Development of Inspector Training Programmes on addressing manual handling during inspection
 - Close co-operation with Inspectors
 - Increased number of Referrals

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- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A. Approach: Main Elements:
 - Element 4: Evidence Based Research
 - Investigation of Manual Handling compensation claims in the healthcare sector (2007)
 - Investigation of Manual Handling Tasks in Construction (2009)

- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A.
Approach: Main Elements
 - **Element 5**: Development of contacts with external organisations (e.g. Arthritis Ireland Coalition on MSD Prevention)

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- Action at Workplace Level: H.S.A. Approach: Main Elements:
 - Element 6: Manual Handling Risk Management
 - Initial work on this initiative during 2010/11
 - Plan to develop further in 2012

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- Manual Handling Risk Management:
 - Meeting with corporate health and safety managers
 - To be up front on our approach
 - To underline the focus on good quality risk assessment as opposed to large quantities of risk assessment paperwork
 - To change the culture in dealing with Manual Handling, more focus on task specific risk assessment and why it can be beneficial

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- Manual Handling Risk Management:

Key elements:

- Manual Handling Policy
- Manual Handling Task Specific Risk Assessment
- Implementation of Control measures and safe systems of work
- Manual Handling Training: (Focus must be task related)
- Internal Audit/Supervision
- Communication with employees
- Employee accountability

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- Closing Points

- We need to focus on work activity improvements through risk management and continue to develop practical guidance
- We need to consider other issues such as ageing workforce, health of workforce, rehabilitation
- We need to consider the productivity benefits as well as health benefits
- We need to continue to give input to the Proposed new MSD Directive
- We need to recognise that there are challenges and work with external organisations

Thank you.

