



Guidance on the Manual Handling Training System – 2010 Revision



Foreword

In recent years the Health and Safety Authority has recognised the need to consider the impact of the work environment on the health and well being of the individual and the population in general. In 2008 the Authority published a Workplace Health and Well-being Strategy to identify interventions needed to address health issues in the workplace. This strategy detailed action plans to address emerging workplace health issues including musculoskeletal disorders. A key recommendation in this strategy was to support the development and implementation of training standards for Manual Handling. The Authority has always placed a strong emphasis on the need to work with employer bodies, trade unions, other Agencies and stakeholders that have influence over the safety and health of workers and those affected by work activity.

I wish to acknowledge the work of the Manual Handling Training Advisory Group set up by the Board of the Authority in 2006 in developing a new system for Manual Handling Training encompassing national training standards and awards for Manual Handling Instructor Training Programmes, FETAC registration for training organisations who offer the awards, FETAC validation of programmes and Recognition of Prior Learning.

This work will support a key strategy of the Health and Safety Authority in the area of Occupational Health to protect workers' health from any existing and emerging work related hazards and to encourage workplace practices that promote good health. The Health and Safety Authority endorses the requirements of the new Manual Handling Training System which are:

- Training Provider Organisations who want to deliver Instructor Training Programmes to attain the new FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling and People Handling Instruction Award Standards must agree their quality assurance procedures and be registered with FETAC
- All new Manual Handling and People Handling Instructor Training Programmes must be validated by FETAC in line with the requirements of the new FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling and People Handling Instruction Award Standards
- All new instructors should complete a FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling Instructor Training Programme or FETAC Level 6 People Handling Instructor training programme
- All existing Instructors should aim to attain a FETAC Level 6 Award for Manual Handling or People Handling Instruction before the end of April 2012. There will be a phasing-in transition period of two years from the date of release of the new standards of March 31st 2010 during which the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) will recognise existing manual handling instructors and new manual handling instructors with a Level 6 FETAC Award
- Registered Training organisations who wish to facilitate existing instructors to achieve the FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling or People Handling Instruction Award on the basis of recognition of prior learning (RPL) must have prior approval for RPL from FETAC

I would like to thank all those who worked to bring about this new system for Manual Handling Training including those who participated in the public consultation process which created the momentum for change. The new system ensures that instructors will have a nationally recognised qualification and that Training Providers have a quality assurance system in place which promotes consistency in training standards into the future. I wish you all every success in working towards these new requirements.

Signed

Martin O' Halloran
HSA CEO

This document was originally published in 2009, the text outlined by red keyline indicates 2010 revisions to text.



Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all the members of the Manual Handling Training Advisory Group for their assistance and dedication in the development of this new Manual Handling Training System. The members of the group are detailed below:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
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What is the background to this new Manual Handling Training System?

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) carried out a review of manual handling training (MHT) in Ireland. The review found that MHT lacked consistency and the skills of the trainers varied. It concluded that there was a need to establish:

- National standards in manual handling instruction
- A system or process for registering training providers who offer Manual Handling or People Handling Instruction

In June 2006, the HSA set up a Manual Handling Training Advisory Group. Since then, the group has worked in conjunction with the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) on developing the new Manual Handling Instruction Standards.

What is FETAC?

The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the statutory awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. FETAC makes quality assured awards that are part of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) from levels 1-6. Meeting learner need is central to the work of FETAC.

FETAC:

- Makes and promotes awards on the National Framework of Qualifications
- Determines standards and award requirements
- Validates programmes leading to awards
- Monitors and quality assures programmes and services

What are the main elements of the new MHT system?

When the Manual Handling Training Advisory Group was set up, it focused primarily on developing standards for instructor qualifications. As the work of the group evolved, it became clear that a number of elements were required. These include:

- Developing two new FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificates for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction
- Agreeing a policy on the need for FETAC Registration of Training Providers who deliver instructor training programmes
- Agreeing a validation process to be used by FETAC to determine if new instructor training programmes submitted are consistent with the requirements of the relevant Level 6 standard
- Agreeing a process for recognising prior learning (RPL) for existing instructors



The table below summarises the main features of the new MHT system, compared with the existing system:

| Current MHT system | The new MHT system |
|--|---|
| <p>The training provider: the training company or sole trader that delivers a Manual Handling or People Handling Instructor training programme</p> <p>The instructor: Person who has completed a 5-day Manual Handling Instructor course or an 8/9-day People Handling Instructor course</p> | <p>The training provider: providers register with FETAC and develop instruction training programmes in line with the new standards</p> <p>The instructor: all new instructors need to attain a FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling or People Handling Instruction Award</p> <p>Existing instructors: attend a full training programme to achieve the relevant qualification(s) or be facilitated through RPL</p> |

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide presents key information and facts on each element of the new MHT system. Its main elements are:

- **Element 1:**
Development of two new FETAC Level 6 Standards for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction
- **Element 2:**
FETAC Registration for Training Providers who currently deliver instructor training programmes
- **Element 3:**
Validation Process for Approving Training Programmes developed in line with the requirements of the new Level 6 Standards
- **Element 4:**
Process for Recognition of Prior Learning for existing instructors



When is the new MHT system expected to be fully operational?

The two new award standards were released by FETAC on March 31st 2010.
The two standards are titled:

- FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Manual Handling Instruction comprising the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing Manual Handling
- FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in People Handling Instruction comprising the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing Manual Handling and the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing People Handling

These standards are available to download from the FETAC website at www.fetac.ie
There will be a phasing-in transition period of two years from the date of release of the new standards during which the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) will recognise existing manual handling instructors and new manual handling instructors with a Level 6 FETAC Award. This will allow time for training organisations to become registered with FETAC and for existing manual handling instructors to decide if they would like to attend a new FETAC Level 6 Instructor training programme or go through the RPL process.

The table below shows the timelines for the implementation of key elements of the new Manual Handling Training System.

Table: Timelines for implementing main elements of the proposed MHT system

| End 2009 | 2010 | | 2011 |
|--|--|---|--|
| ELEMENT 1: Development of two new FETAC Level 6 Standards for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction | ELEMENT 2: FETAC Registration for Training Providers who currently deliver instructor training programmes | ELEMENT 3: Validation Process for Training Programmes implemented with the requirements of the new Level 6 Standards | ELEMENT 4: Process for Recognition of Prior Learning for existing instructors |

**FETAC approves
2 new Level 6
MHT standards**

FETAC releases
2 standards

Training providers are registered with FETAC (ongoing process)

Training providers
ready to submit new
programmes for
validation

**FETAC starts
validating
programmes**

Training providers ready to provide
Level 6 programmes

**RPL providers are registered with FETAC
and ready to assess existing instructors**

Key milestones

*Provisional timelines
(subject to change)*



Elements 1-4 of the proposed MHT system

Element 1:

Development of two new FETAC Level 6 Standards for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction

The Manual Handling Training Advisory Group has worked with FETAC on developing the standards for the Specific Purpose Certificates for Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction.

Under the new system, it will be expected that all new manual handling or people handling instructors will attain a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Award. **The training programmes for these FETAC Level 6 awards can only be delivered by a FETAC-registered training provider.**

The standards were formally approved by the FETAC board and released on March 31st 2010. They can be downloaded at www.fetac.ie

The standards specify the knowledge, skills and competence that must be attained in order to achieve a FETAC Level 6 Certificate in Manual Handling Instruction or People Handling Instruction.

FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Manual Handling Instruction comprising the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing Manual Handling

This contains one component: Instructing Manual Handling. The component specification details the learning outcomes that the learner who has completed the training programme will be able to demonstrate as well as the assessment requirements.

The learner will be equipped with the knowledge, skill and competence to effectively design and deliver manual handling instruction in the workplace.

FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in People Handling Instruction comprising the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing Manual Handling and the Level 6 Component Certificate Instructing People Handling

This contains two components: Instructing Manual Handling and Instructing People Handling. The candidate cannot attain this certificate unless both components are completed successfully.

The two component specifications detail the learning outcomes that the learner, who has completed the training programme, will be able to demonstrate as well as the assessment requirements.

It may be possible to run the training programmes together for both components and to complete the assessment at the end of the second component. The assessment must assess the learning outcomes for each of the components. Only when both components are completed will the candidate be equipped with the knowledge, skill and competence to effectively design and deliver people handling instruction in the workplace.



Element 2:

FETAC Registration for Training Providers who currently deliver instructor training programmes

A training provider is a person or body that provides, organises or procures a programme of education and training. FETAC Registered Training Providers are responsible for delivering courses based on FETAC standards and for providing fair and consistent assessment of learners.

As part of the new system, training providers who want to develop training programmes – for a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate for either Manual Handling or People Handling Instruction – will need to apply to become quality-assured, FETAC-registered training providers. Most training providers who will want to deliver such programmes have at this stage completed the process of becoming a FETAC registered training provider.

When a training provider is FETAC-registered, they can then develop training programmes to meet the requirements of the new Level 6 Standards.

Once a training programme is validated, it will then be possible for the training provider to offer the programme to candidates who want to become instructors.

Candidates who complete the training programmes successfully should attain a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Award.

The FETAC website outlines the process required to become a registered provider: see www.fetac.ie





Element 3:

Validation Process for Training Programmes implemented in line with the requirements of the new Level 6 Standards

When the new Level 6 Manual Handling Instruction and People Handling Instruction Standards were formally released on March 31st 2010, FETAC-registered training providers started to develop training programmes to meet the requirements of the relevant standard.

As part of the validation process, the training provider submits an application that includes outline details of the proposed training programme details. If everything is in order, FETAC will approve the programme and the FETAC-registered provider can then offer the programme to new candidates.

FETAC has already started the process of validation and new FETAC Level 6 Instructor training programmes will be available towards the end of 2010.

Candidates who complete the training programmes successfully should attain a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Award.

FETAC will also have an ongoing monitoring function to ensure that standards are maintained.





Element 4:

Process for Recognition of Prior Learning for existing instructors

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process by which prior learning of an individual is assessed against the standards for an award. . The RPL process may offer current manual handling instructors with an opportunity to have their prior learning recognised. There are two parties to this RPL process, the training provider who can offer RPL and the instructor who wants to apply for RPL.

(i) The training provider who can offer RPL

Registered FETAC providers already offering the validated programmes in manual and people handling and with FETAC RPL approval for the FETAC Level 6 Award awards will be able to facilitate suitable individuals with prior learning to be assessed for these FETAC Level 6 awards.

There are a number of training providers currently in the process of registering with FETAC to offer RPL. It is likely that it will be early 2011 before the RPL process is ready to roll out.

(ii) The instructor who wants to apply for RPL

To apply for RPL, an existing instructor should:

- Make initial contact with a FETAC-registered training provider who is registered to offer RPL.
- Submit an application form along with a curriculum vitae to the training provider.
- Complete all sections of the application form
- Submit the requested supplementary information

Applicants will be notified if they have been successful or not, or if they need to provide more information. In the next stage of the RPL process, successful applicants will be invited to attend a formal assessment, which will include:

- Examination
- Assignment
- Skills demonstration

The assessment is designed to assess the learning outcomes for the relevant FETAC Level 6 Certificate. Feedback should be provided to applicants who are unsuccessful and an appeals procedure must be in place.

Information on how the RPL process will operate is detailed in the Appendix 1 of this guide.



Conclusion

The Health and Safety Authority full endorses this new Manual Handling Training System. The authority recognises that continuous communication has been critical throughout the process of developing and implementing this new system.

Further information to assist stakeholders is detailed in the Appendices including an RPL Information Sheet, Frequently asked questions (FAQs) and a short guide on the key learning outcomes for Operative Training programmes which will be delivered by Instructors who attain a FETAC Level 6 Award in Manual Handling Instruction.

In 2006 The Manual Handling Training Advisory Group started its work on the development of new Training Standards. Since then the following outcomes have been achieved:

- (i) Two new FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling and People Handling Instruction Standards published. These can be sourced at the following weblink:
<http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/awardsinfo/manualhandling.htm>
- (ii) Many Training Providers throughout Ireland are completing the process of registering as a FETAC registered training provider with a full approved quality assurance system in place.
- (iii) FETAC registered training providers are now developing new FETAC Level 6 Instructor training programmes and the first FETAC Level 6 Manual Handling and People Handling Instructor training programmes will be available in late 2010. Refer to the web link below for details of what training programmes have been validated by FETAC.
<http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/registration/validation.htm>
- (iv) An RPL process has been agreed with FETAC and FETAC registered training providers have started the process of registering to offer RPL. Instructors will be in a position to apply for RPL in early 2011 and there will be a weblink detailing a list of approved RPL providers made available; as soon as RPL providers are approved by FETAC.
- (v) There has been regular communication alerts with stakeholders through presentations at national and regional workshops, completion of nationwide seminars during 2009, written notification to training providers on proposed plans and the development of FAQs which are included in the Appendices and at our website at **www.hsa.ie**

The Manual Handling Training Advisory Group will finish its work at the end of 2010 and may meet in the future to review the implementation of the new Manual Handling Training System. However it is now time to continue the process of transfer to the new system and allow time for the system to become embedded and to ensure that in the future all Instructors will have a nationally recognized FETAC Level 6 Award for Manual Handling Instruction of People Handling Instruction attained from a FETAC registered training provider.



Appendix 1

Recognition of Prior Learning Information Sheet

1. Introduction

Purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and requirements for providers

The RPL process facilitates existing manual handling or people handling instructors to achieve the FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in **Manual Handling** or **People Handling Instruction**. The purpose of this overview is to outline the model stages that a Registered Training Provider must provide to learners seeking Recognition of Prior Learning. The Training Provider must be registered with FETAC and have their programme validated leading to this award. Only FETAC Registered Training Providers (RTP's) may offer RPL for this award and they must have specific approval from FETAC to offer RPL for this award.

2. RPL Overview

Model steps for achieving a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in **Manual Handling Instruction** or **People Handling Instruction**

Step 1: Provider responds to enquiries or contact by individuals seeking recognition of their skills as manual handling or people handling instructors.

Step 2: Applicant completes and submits application form including supplementary information. The criteria against which the application is evaluated is provided by the RTP.

Step 3: The RTP evaluates the application.

Step 4: Applicants will be notified of one of the following:

1. They have been successful to progress to the next stage of the RPL process
2. They are required to provide more information,
3. They are required to complete additional elements of training / education activity or
4. They are deemed unsuccessful to progress to the next stage of the RPL process.

Step 5: Successful applicants will be invited to attend a formal assessment which will include the following:-

- a) Examination
- b) Assignment (can be prepared in advance) and
- c) Skills demonstration

The learner **must** achieve a pass in each of the assessments.

Step 6: Results of assessment processed by the provider in the normal way.

How will the applicant be contacted / informed?

As appropriate by the provider.

What kinds of advice/feedback may be made by assessors or mentors, guiders, peers, examiners, etc?

Feedback will be provided to candidates who are unsuccessful and what they need to do to achieve the award.



Appendix 2

FAQs on New Manual Handling Instructor Training System

| No | Question | Answer |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | What is meant by a registered training provider? | A registered training provider is an individual, or a company/organisation, which has agreed their quality assurance procedures with FETAC and is registered with FETAC to provide training courses that lead to FETAC awards. The list of registered training providers is available on the FETAC website www.fetac.ie |
| | | There is also information and an application form available on the website for individuals or companies who wish to become registered training providers. |
| 2 | Is the process for registering with FETAC the same for small organisations and for large organisations? | Yes the process is the same but the details on the application form may vary. |
| 3 | Who monitors registered training providers to ensure that they adhere to their procedures when delivering training courses? | FETAC has the monitoring role for all registered training providers. |
| 4 | Will any current manual handling, or people handling, instructor training courses be recognised after the new FETAC standards are released? | When the FETAC standards for manual handling instruction and people handling instruction are released, a registered training provider must submit their instructor training programme to FETAC for validation. When the programme is validated the registered training provider can then provide FETAC Level 6 manual handling or people handling instructor-training courses. |
| 5 | Is there a charge for providers to register with FETAC? | No, There is no charge for providers to register with FETAC. When providers deliver courses that lead to FETAC level 6 awards there will be a charge for each certificate that FETAC provides for successful learners. |
| 6 | Could a sole trader provide instructor training within a larger organisation that is a FETAC registered training provider? | Yes a sole trader could be contracted to a larger organisation. However the sole trader must adhere to the organisations quality assured procedures and the organisation has overall responsibility for the quality of the training delivered. |
| 7 | How can a company register with FETAC to provide Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for current instructors? | The company must first register with FETAC and agree their quality assurance. The company must then submit a programme to FETAC to provide instructor courses that meet the new FETAC standards. FETAC will validate that programme. The company must then register with FETAC to provide RPL. Information on all these processes is available on the FETAC website www.fetac.ie |

FAQs relevant to people who currently are manual handling, or people handling, instructors

| No | Question | Answer |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Do individual manual handling instructors have to be registered with FETAC? | Companies or organisations that provide instructor training courses must be registered with FETAC. Individual instructors who provide manual handling training at operative level do not have to register with FETAC. |
| 2 | Will my current manual handling instructor training course and certificate be recognised after the new FETAC standards for manual handling instruction and for people handling instruction, are released? | Any instructor who has previously attended an instructor-training course must achieve the FETAC level 6 award in manual handling instruction or people handling instruction, through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, or through attending another course. There will be a phase in period of approximately 2 years after the standards are released to allow existing instructors to achieve the FETAC level 6 award. |
| 3 | When will recognition of prior learning (RPL) be available for existing instructors to achieve a FETAC level 6 award in manual handling instruction or in people handling instruction? | The system for RPL for current instructors should be available in 2011. |
| 4 | Who will provide RPL for current instructors who wish to achieve a FETAC level 6 award in manual handling instruction or in people handling instruction? | <p>When RPL is available, current instructors must contact a company who is registered with FETAC to provide RPL. The list of companies who can provide RPL is available on the FETAC website and the instructor can choose a company from this list. www.fetac.ie</p> <p>The company will then provide the information, documentation and assessment required for the instructor to achieve a FETAC level 6 award through RPL.</p> |
| 5 | Is there a timeframe for current manual handling instructors, or people handling instructors, to achieve the FETAC level 6 award through RPL? | Yes, Current instructors will have approximately 2 years from the time the standards are released, to achieve a Level 6 FETAC award in manual handling or people handling instruction, through RPL. |
| 6 | Will there be a need for instructors, who have achieved a FETAC level 6 award for manual handling instruction or people handling instruction, to be recertified at any stage? | The FETAC level 6 award is an award for life so there is no need for recertification. However continuous professional development will be important for instructors to maintain their competence and to remain up to date with ongoing developments in the area of manual handling and people handling. |



Appendix 3

Guidance on Manual Handling Training Programmes to be delivered by an Instructor with a FETAC Level 6 Specific Purpose Certificate in Manual Handling Instruction

Objective of the Guide

To provide guidance and direction to manual handling instructors on key components of learning that should be included in a manual handling training programme for relevant employees in the workplace.

Key aims of a Manual Handling Training Programme for employees in the Workplace

The provision of manual handling training should provide participants with the knowledge and skills to allow him or her carry out a manual handling activity in a manner which reduces or eliminates the risk of injury. The instructor needs to clearly outline the aims of a manual handling training programme which should ensure that participants will:

- Be aware of the legislative requirements in relation to manual handling
- Acquire the basic knowledge on risk factors for back problems and in maintaining a healthy back
- Be aware of how to carry out a basic personal/dynamic manual handling risk assessment to determine if the load can be handled safely
- Be aware of the specific manual handling hazards in their work area identified in the task specific manual handling risk assessment and on measures to avoid or reduce the risk of injury including use of mechanical aids or reorganisation of the work activity.
- State the main principles of safer manual handling
- Carry out relevant manual handling techniques and understand the need to further develop these skills in the workplace

The instructor needs to ensure that participants can demonstrate both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills.

Key learning outcomes for those who attend a manual handling training programme will include the following:

Having attended a manual handling training programme delivered by an Instructor the participant should:

- Have a basic knowledge of the legislation in relation to manual handling
- Acquire the basic knowledge of the functions of the back, how it can be injured and how to keep it healthy. Participants should not engage in any flexibility exercises without consulting a relevant medical professional.
- Be able to carry out a personal/dynamic risk assessment for the task to be completed to determine if the load can be handled safely



- Be aware of the specific manual handling hazards identified in the task specific manual handling risk assessment and the measures to avoid or reduce the risk of injury including use of mechanical aids or reorganisation of the work activity
- Be able to state the main principles of safe manual handling and demonstrate practical application of the main principles of manual handling to relevant manual handling tasks in the workplace
- Be aware of the need to further develop manual handling skills in the workplace

Additional learning outcomes for employees involved in patient/client handling

Employees involved in patient/client handling in addition to the learning outcomes above should:

- Be aware of local policies and procedures related to handling patients which are relevant to their work area (such as bariatric guidelines, falls strategies, infection control, hoist management etc.)
- Be able to identify the additional factors which need to be included in a manual handling risk assessment when handling people
- Be aware of written documentation in relation to patient handling risk assessments in their work area
- Be aware of a range of handling aids available in their work area and the safe use of same
- Participate in a range of core patient handling techniques relevant to their work tasks

Housekeeping Issues for Manual Handling Training Programmes

It is important that the training is organised and planned properly. The manual handling training programme should be conducted in an appropriate learning environment. While there are no specific requirements on how a Manual handling training programme should be conducted, there are some points that should be borne in mind during the planning and implementation of a training programmes:

- Classes should not be too large, the class size should allow for individual demonstrations and practice (usually 10-12)
- The length of time take for training depends on many factors including the level of risk in the work environment and the complexity of handling procedures being taught. It is reasonable to expect that enough time is allowed to ensure that all the aims of the training programme are covered adequately and to ensure the learning outcomes are achieved, particularly in relation to practical skills demonstration
- The training should include classroom tuition and practical demonstrations. Ideally these demonstrations should take place in the workplace



Refresher Training

Refresher training will be at intervals of not more than every three years or when there is a major change in the work involved or equipment used or when an employee is transferred to a new work area.

Supervision

Line manager supervision and setting standards of good practice are vital to the success of manual handling training. The culture and procedures must be in place to expect and enable employees carry out personal/ dynamic risk assessment and use handling skills taught on training sessions.

After participants in a manual handling training programme have completed their training and have returned to their normal work duties, it should be a matter of policy that there is follow up workplace supervision to ensure that the lessons learned are put into effect at the workplace. There is a responsibility on the part of participants to ensure that they put into practice the learnings achieved at the training programme.

Task specific Manual Handling Risk Assessment

There is strong evidence that interventions predominantly based on technique training will not work. The employer must conduct a risk assessment of work activities involving manual handling. This risk assessment if completed properly will inform as to what improvements need to be put in place to reduce or avoid manual handling.

Further Information

Guide on the Manual Handling Training System at www.hsa.ie

Manual Handling Risk Assessment in the Hospitality Sector at www.hsa.ie

Manual Handling Risk Assessment in the Retail Sector at www.hsa.ie

Guide on the Manual Handling of Loads Regulation at www.hsa.ie

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