

## MANUAL HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### **Overview:**

Our workplace is committed to continuously improving the management and standards of Occupational Health and Safety. This commitment extends to having a Policy which aims to eliminate manual handling incidents through a system of identification, assessment and control, supported by appropriate training and education.

### **Definitions:**

#### Accountable Person:

An individual, who assumes responsibility for the health or welfare of any other person in a workplace by providing instruction, direction, assistance, advice or service, is deemed an Accountable Person in accordance with the *Workplace health and safety Regulations 1998*. All management and supervisory staff (which includes those with responsibility for students) are therefore considered "Accountable Persons"

#### Employee:

For the purposes of this Policy, employee refers to any staff member.

#### Manual Handling:

Manual handling means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate or inanimate object.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### Accountable Persons:

Ensure the procedures are implemented within their areas of responsibility. Provide information and training to employees regarding correct procedures in relation to manual handling. The *Workplace Health & Safety Regulations 1998* designates Accountable Persons as having responsibility for hazard identification, risk assessment, control of risk and compliance with the *Worksafe Australia national standard for Manual Handling*.

#### Employees:

To assess all manual handling tasks with reference to one's own capabilities and request assistance where required. To undertake manual handling training when requested.

#### **Procedure:**

Procedures for safe manual handling have been drawn from the National Australian Standard and the national Code of Practice.

The Safe Manual Handling Checklist documented in the *National Manual Handling Code of Practice* forms part of these procedures and provides a review process to be conducted jointly by supervisors and employees in assessing risk for particular tasks.

When dealing with manual handling a number of factors should be considered which may eliminate or minimise the associated risks. Alternative solutions to manual handling can often be found and these should be considered before the handling takes place.

### **Must the material be handled?**

Unnecessary manual handling may be eliminated through planning and organisation. Alternatively, consideration of material flow may reduce and minimise manual handling.

### **Must the material be lifted?**

There are many alternatives to lifting material, such as sliding, rolling, pushing and pouring. Where ever practical these methods should be considered as an alternative to lifting to best minimise the risks associated with manual handling.

### **Are there lifting aids available?**

There are many mechanical and non-mechanical lifting aids available such as winches, pulleys, fork lifts and trolleys. The use of these aids can reduce the risk of injury and they should be utilised wherever possible.

There are times when manual handling will be necessary and before the handling occurs, those involved should consider the nature and journey of the load to be moved.

Extreme care should be taken when handling loads that have dangerous characteristics such as those listed above and where possible, handling methods other than lifting and carrying should be used.

When moving the load the path taken should be carefully considered. Is it the best route to take, does it have good visibility and is the path free from obstructions such as furniture and tripping hazards?

When all other forms of control have been eliminated and it is necessary to handle the material manually, you should consider whether you can safely lift the load and whether assistance is available.

### **Can the load be lifted safely?**

Before an individual or a team lifts a load they should decide whether the load is within their capacity. In doing so they should consider any condition that may affect their lifting capacity such as injuries or medical conditions.

### **Is assistance available?**

Gaining assistance with lifts reduces the risk of injury. When using a team lift, all participants must be fully aware of any necessary information about the load, such as it's destination and any dangerous characteristics it has, which might affect the lift.

### **Lifting Technique**

Steps to be followed when lifting a load:

1. Preparation:
  - Clear the lifting area of all hazards and obstructions
  - Face the direction you intend to go

2. Check the load
  - Check the characteristics of the load
  - Make any necessary alterations, such as obtaining protective equipment.
3. Size up the load
  - Check the labels for any weight indications
  - Test the load by moving it slightly to get a feel for its weight
4. Correct foot position
  - The front foot should be placed beside the load and pointing in the direction you intend to move
  - The back foot should be placed slightly behind and hip width from the front foot
  - This positioning provides a stable base and even weight distribution
5. Proper Hold
  - Hands should be diagonally opposite for security and comfort
  - Use full length of fingers and palms, if possible, to avoid fatigue
6. Bend your Knees
  - Go down to the load by bending your knees, using leg muscles instead of back muscles
7. Keep your back straight
  - Make your back is as straight as possible
  - Raise your head with your chin just before lifting
8. Arms kept close to body
  - During lifting and carrying your arms should be kept as close to your body as possible
  - Elbows should be kept in to the side.
  - Do not change your grip whilst carrying
9. Setting the load down
  - When setting the load down the reverse procedures should be used.

**References:**

This document has been developed in reference to the following:

*Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*

*Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998, Part 4, division 1, Regulation 65*

*Worksafe Australia National Standard for Manual Handling.*