

HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASK TRAINING FACT SHEET

For many businesses, manual tasks are an important part of getting the job done. Some of these tasks can be hazardous and are often the most common cause of workplace injuries. The provision of training plays a role in protecting workers from harm, but it shouldn't be the first line of defence.

Note: Legislative requirements for managing hazardous manual tasks (HMT),

The law states that a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) must follow a risk management approach to control the risk of a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) occurring. This means they must put control measures in place, that are in line with the Hierarchy of Control (Elimination, Isolation, Substitution and/or Engineering controls). The use of an Administrative control (training, procedures etc.) should only be used to control any remaining risk.

This is a legislative requirement under Clause 60 and part 3.1 of the Workplace Health & Safety Regulations 2017.

The following publications contain more information:

- Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017
- The risk management process for manual tasks
- Hazardous manual tasks - Overview
- Code of Practice - Hazardous Manual Tasks
- Hazardous manual tasks - Risk management worksheet.

A COMMON APPROACH

A common approach taken by business' is to provide workers with generic 'how to lift' type training (e.g. bend your knees, keep your back straight) at the commencement of their employment and on an ongoing basis. They then rely on workers following these 'safe' techniques or principles as a way to protect them from harm. This type of training is often used as the only control measure.

When this approach is taken, workers are still at risk of injury. Providing 'how to lift' training does not control the actual source of risk, and research evidence has demonstrated that providing 'how to lift' training is not effective in reducing injury risks¹.

By taking this approach, a business is not meeting its risk management duties under WHS legislation.

Instead, a PCBU should be controlling the risk using elimination, isolation, substitution and/or engineering controls. The training provided should then support these measures and systems of work implemented to control hazardous manual tasks.

Page 2 and 3 of this factsheet will provide you with the information on what should be included in hazardous manual task training.

¹C. Haslam et al., 2007; Hogan et al., 2014; Martimo et al., 2007; Verbeek et al., 2012 as cited in Oakman, Clune & Stuckey, 2019, pp. 39

What should be covered in hazardous manual task training?

The Hazardous Manual Task Code of Practice 2019 outlines that training should cover:

- manual task risk management, including hazardous manual task risk factors and sources of risk (outlined in checklist)
- specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them
- how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures
- how to report a problem or maintenance issues.

Note: Training needs to use language and examples that are understood by all workers who receive the training.

To assist you, we've provided a detailed checklist on page 3 that outlines the minimum training inclusions.

Who should training be provided to?

Training should be provided to:

- workers required to carry out, schedule, supervise or manage hazardous manual tasks
- in-house designers, engineers and anybody responsible for the selection, purchase and maintenance of plant, structures and/or the design and organisation of the job/task
- health and safety representatives.

When should training be reviewed?

Training program should be reviewed on a regular basis and when there is change to:

- work processes
- plant or equipment
- implementation of new control measures
- relevant legislation
- other issues that may impact on the way the task is performed.

What records should I keep?

You should keep records of induction and training given to your workers. The records can include information such as the date of the session, the topics dealt with, and the name and signature of the trainer and each of the workers who attended the session.

Disclaimer

This publication may contain information about the regulation and enforcement of work health and safety legislation in NSW. It may include some of your obligations under some of the legislation that SafeWork NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation. Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

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HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASK TRAINING CHECKLIST

The following is the minimum information that should be included as part of your hazardous manual tasks (HMT) training.

Workers are trained in the companies HMT risk management procedure	
<p>This looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a HMT • How HMT's are identified • How HMT's are assessed • How HMT's are controlled • How HMT control measures are implemented, monitored and reviewed • How workers are consulted throughout the entire risk management process 	<p>For further information on HMT risk management, refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk management process for manual tasks • Hazardous manual tasks Code of Practice • Hazardous manual tasks - Overview • Hazardous manual tasks - Risk management worksheet
Workers are provided training and information on HMT risk factors and the source of the risk	
<p>This looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information on what are HMT risk factors • Providing training on how to identify and report any HMT risk factors associated with their work tasks • Providing information on the source of risk associated with any HMT's • Providing information on any measures implemented to address the source of risk 	<p>HMT risk factors (These are the factors that can lead to an MSD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive or sustained forces • High or Sudden forces • Sustained or awkward postures • Repetitive movement • Exposure to vibration • Duration of the task (when one or more of the above risk factors is present) • Mental stress / work pressure <p>The sources of the risk (These are the things that are responsible for a risk factor being present):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace design and layout • Systems of work including organisational and psychosocial factors e.g. pace of work, lack of control • Work environment e.g. poor lighting • the nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things involved in the task
Workers are trained in specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them	
<p>This looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information on which manual tasks have been determined to be hazardous • Providing information and training on the specific control measures in place for each HMT • Providing training on how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures (This does not mean "how to lift" type training) 	
Workers are trained on how to report hazards and maintenance issues	
<p>This looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training on your internal hazard reporting procedure and how to report any HMT related concerns 	