



# Workforce

## **Manual Handling Policy: guide for managers**

This guide will help managers to understand the Manual Handling Policy.

The following guide forms part of the standard for workforce policies. These policies apply to all eligible staff within NHS Scotland, regardless of the board they are employed by. The guide covers:

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# What is the purpose of the Manual Handling Policy?

The policy aims to make sure everyone is aware of their responsibilities in line with health and safety legislation. The policy also provides a framework to:

- Make sure all employees are aware of and comply with safe manual handling practices.
- Manage and reduce the risks associated with manual handling.
- Support staff who have existing muscle and joint (musculoskeletal) symptoms.

## Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all employees. It also applies to bank, secondees, agency, sessional workers, volunteers, contractors, and those on placement, such as trainees, students, or individuals undertaking work experience.

## Manager responsibilities

As a manager, you are expected to:

- Make sure that employees in your team are appropriately trained in manual handling.
- Identify and assess manual-handling risks within your area of responsibility, including for individuals and explore measures to reduce risk to the lowest level practicable.
- Be aware of how to access specialist advice, resources and guidance, including manual handling training and support networks.
- Make sure that the necessary documentation is completed, for example, risk assessments.
- Make sure that the required documentation and process are completed for all injuries or near misses involving manual handling. This includes RIDDOR reportable incidents.

## Procedure

There will be a competent person in your board who will lead, coordinate and develop local-level strategic programmes to reduce work-related musculoskeletal disorders to meet legislation.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

- Delivering relevant manual handling programmes.
- Keeping a record of all employees who have received, or are still to receive, training.
- Carry out site visits to reinforce manual handling education and provide advice where necessary.
- Provide advice on manual handling issues, new projects, and buying equipment.

As a manager, you should liaise with the competent person if any manual handling risks are identified.

## **Manual handling passport**

The Scottish Manual Handling Passport Scheme is designed to improve the standard and consistency of manual handling education. It is used to record and confirm an employee's manual handling training and competence. It is the standard approach for education, skills and knowledge across the NHS in Scotland.

As a manager, you should review an employee's Manual Handling Passport to identify any skills gaps and arrange further training if necessary. This can include e-learning.

[Find out more about the Scottish Manual Handling Passport Scheme.](#)

## **Identifying and reducing manual handling risks**

Moving and handling risk assessments help identify where injuries could occur, and where possible, remove risk factors. This can be task or person-specific. It will include requirements under other workforce policies, for example, the NHS Scotland Maternity policy

You must comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations to avoid, assess and reduce the risk of injury from manual handling. Liaise with your competent person to make sure a written risk assessment of moving and handling tasks is completed for your area.

[Learn more about Manual Handling Operations Regulations.](#)

Conducting a risk assessment will help identify and mitigate hazards by making sure that tasks are performed safely, such as:

- lifting
- lowering
- carrying
- pushing
- pulling

Where the assessment identifies a risk of 'harm' from moving and handling, you should consult with the competent person for manual handling advice. This may include referral to occupational health and safety for advice on the suitability of tasks for different employees.

In line with the hierarchy of control, the primary aim following a risk assessment is to remove the manual handling risk. However, if elimination is not practicable, the risk should be reduced through:

- substitution
- engineering controls
- administrative controls

Protective equipment, such as back aids, should only be used as a last resort.

These risk assessments inform safe systems of work and any associated training needs

## **Reporting and recording**

You should make sure employees report all manual handling incidents, including near misses, as soon as they happen. You should then record and investigate the matter in line with local protocols and procedures.

If any employee is absent for more than 7 days in a row because of a work-related manual handling accident, you should seek advice from your local health and safety team. They will advise on any onward reporting to external agencies, including the Health and Safety Executive. Where this is required, notification must be made within 15 days of the incident. Similar reporting may also apply to modified duties because of injuries sustained. This meets RIDDOR requirements.

## **RIDDOR reporting**

If someone has been injured because of a work-related accident, this may have to be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Not all accidents need to be reported. A RIDDOR report is only required when the accident is work-related and results in a reportable injury.

Under Regulation 4 of RIDDOR, certain 'specified injuries' must be reported, such as:

- fractures
- amputation
- crush injury to the head or torso

[Find out more about RIDDOR.](#)

The employee's injury or condition may not become apparent until some time after the accident. However, it must be reported as soon as it prevents them from performing their normal work duties for more than 7 consecutive days.

A RIDDOR report must be made if a work-related accident causes an employee to be unable to do their normal work for more than 7 consecutive days. This applies even if the injury isn't obvious immediately after the incident. The 7-day count begins as soon as the injury stops the employee from doing their job.

Some situations will include days when the injured person would not normally have been expected to work. These non-working days must also be considered when deciding whether the employee was unable to do their normal duties for more than 7 consecutive days.

Similar reporting may also apply to modified duties because of injuries sustained. This meets RIDDOR requirements.

All work-related manual handling accidents and incidents must be reported on the board's incident reporting system.

## **Monitoring and review**

As a manager, you must regularly review your workplace, equipment, and procedures to make sure risk assessments are up to date. If a risk assessment shows that new equipment is needed, you must liaise with the relevant specialist team to purchase it.

The review process includes:

- Collecting and monitoring all reported incidents.
- Reporting incident statistics and safety improvements to Health and Safety Committees and Partnership Forums.

- Reporting to the Board to highlight progress in reducing risk and incidents and making recommendations.

The data collected should be used to monitor the policy's implementation.

## Useful links

- [HSE—Moving and handling in health and social care](#)
- [HSE—Manual handling at work](#)
- [HSE—Appointing a competent person](#)
- [Scottish Manual Handling Passport Scheme](#)