

Dawlish Town Council

Policy on Manual Handling Operations

1. Statement of Policy

Manual handling operations have significant potential to cause injury. Injuries caused by manual handling can have long-term effects and can adversely affect people's ability to do certain work. The most common type of manual handling injury is a strain or sprain, often involving the back, but more serious injuries e.g. slipped disc, may occur. Injuries need not be confined to the back. Crush injuries e.g. of toes or fingers may occur. Cuts e.g. to the hands or fingers, may occur if lifting or carrying loads with sharp edges.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 are designed to protect employees from risk of injury. The Council recognises that many employees will have occasion to lift or carry loads even if this is not a significant part of their usual job. For this reason it is important that every employee should be familiar with this policy, not just those who regularly undertake manual handling.

The Regulations place duties on employers and employees. Employers' duties include avoiding the need for employees to undertake any manual handling operations which involve a risk of injury. There is a requirement for employers to carry out an assessment where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid manual handling operations which involve a risk of injury. Furthermore, where there is a risk of injury, the employer must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A legal duty is placed on employees to make full and proper use of any safe system of work that the employer puts in place.

The Council recognises the significant potential for injuries to occur if manual handling operations are not carried out properly. The arrangements given this policy, if followed, should ensure adequate control of the risk and compliance with the law.

2. Organisation and arrangements

2.1 Town Clerk

will :-

- so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff and do not undertake manual handling operations which involve a risk of injury;
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out for any manual handling operations under their control which may involve a risk of injury. Such assessments will normally be made by the line manager in conjunction with and with assistance from the Health Safety and Welfare Officer;
- make arrangements that will ensure the risk of injury from manual handling operations is reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable and in line with the findings of the risk assessment;
- where possible provide employees with information on the weight of each load and the heaviest side where the centre of gravity is not positioned centrally;
- arrange for employees who may be especially at risk to receive training in manual handling technique.

2.2 The Health Safety and Welfare Officer

- will advise and work with staff to ensure that, where necessary, manual handling risk assessments are carried out;
- will liaise with the Training providers to ensure that appropriate training is given to employees identified as being especially at risk.

2.3 All Staff

Appendix 1 gives some definitions which may be useful. Appendix 2 gives simple guidance on manual handling which should be followed by anyone undertaking a manual handling operation.

All employees:-

- must, so far as is reasonably practicable, refrain from undertaking manual handling operations that involve a risk of injury. Where staff suspect that there may be a risk of injury they should contact their line manager;

- must make full and proper use of any equipment provided to reduce the risk from manual handling operations and must work in accordance with training and instructions that they have received.

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Appendix 1

Some definitions

Manual Handling Operations are operations which involve the movement of a load by human effort as opposed to mechanical handling by use of powered devices (e.g. fork-lift truck). Manual handling includes pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying, supporting and putting down of a load. Use of mechanical handling aids (e.g. a sack truck) may reduce the risk, but this will still be a manual handling operation.

A load is a discrete movable object. This may be an inanimate object but it could be a live animal. Where a tool (e.g. an electric drill) is being used for its intended purpose this does not constitute a load and the tool use is not covered by the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (but the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations would apply).

Manual handling injuries are injuries to any part of the body caused by the handling operation. This includes not only back and other musculoskeletal injuries, but also cuts, bruises, burns, etc. caused by the load itself. Injuries caused by chemical hazards associated with the load are not considered as manual handling injuries, although they are covered by other legislation, i.e. the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999.

Appendix 2

Good practice for manual handling operations

- always use aids to handling if they are available (e.g. sack barrow, trolley, hydraulic lift, etc.);
- never attempt to lift excessive weights. There is no weight limit specified in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, but if a person suspects that a weight is excessive then they should use a handling aid or get another person to assist;
- use the legs and knees to lift and keep the back straight;
- where possible avoid tasks which involve stooping down, stretching up, overreaching or twisting;
- check for sharp edges or other hazards on the load before the lift;
- plan the handling operation. Make sure that the setting down area is clear and that the route is clear of obstructions before the lift;
- safe storage is important. Do not store heavy items which must be lifted by hand at either low or high level as this increases the risk of injury;
- report any manual handling injury on an accident report form, even if it does seem minor at the time.