MANUAL HANDLING OF LOADS

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

The Health and Safety (Manual Handling Operations) Regulations 1992 are concerned with the manual handling of loads, defined as 'the transporting, including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying, of a load'.

It is the cause of a large number of injuries each year, and these activities are associated with about 25% of reportable accidents. Manual Handling injuries can also result in long term absence from work, and possible limited ability to return to normal work after the incident.

Problems may be encountered anywhere in the University and in consequence a broad spectrum of employees associated with a wide variety of workplaces (e.g. laboratories, offices, the grounds, halls of residence, medical examination areas) can be involved.

Since any employee may at some time need to move a heavy object, this code of practice gives general guidance on the best way to avoid injury whilst handling a load.

However, for those employees whose work involves a significant proportion of routine or repetitive manual handling, more detailed attention needs to be given to potential risks and the ways in which such risks can be minimised. If required, more detailed guidance and information can be obtained from Safety and Environmental Protection Services.

The Regulation places a responsibility on the University to:

a) Avoid the need for any manual handling which might involve a risk of injury, so far as is reasonably practicable.

b) Where the need for manual handling is unavoidable, to make an assessment of the risks and reduce these, so far as is reasonably practicable.

2. Scope and application of policy

The objective of this procedure is to prevent the occurrence of injury and reduce the severity of injuries resulting inform manual handling tasks performed by staff and students of the University

The load can be any object including a person or animal. No weight limits are specified within the Regulations therefore apply to any task which involves manual handling of a "load" as defined below.

Definitions

- **Manual Handling** means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by the person to lower, lift, pull, push, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate or inanimate object
- **Hazard** is the potential for causing injury, loss or danger
- **Risk** is the likelihood of suffering injury, loss or danger depending on the frequency that a task is performed and the consequences that may ensue.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Head of Management Unit:

- Allocate adequate human, financial and physical resources to ensure compliance with the University's Manual Handling procedure
- Considering manual handling issues when planning new facilities or relocating to a different location
- Allocating resources in order for staff and students receive appropriate information, instruction and training and the necessary supervision to perform manual handling tasks safely
- Responsible for the effective implementation, promotion and support of the Manual Handling procedure in their area of responsibility.

3.2 Line Management:

- Implementing and maintaining safe manual handling procedures in accordance with the University's Manual Handling Procedure
- Ensuring that staff and students under their control are properly trained in manual handling and understand and follow safe manual handling practises
- Actively practising and developing attitudes towards safe manual handling practises
- Ensuring that staff and students under their control use manual handling equipment provided
- Ensuring that lifting equipment is maintained in a safe condition

3.3 Staff Responsibilities:

- Complying with all Manual Handling safety instructions
- follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety
- make proper use of equipment provided for their safety
- co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters
- inform the employer if they identify hazardous handling activities
- take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk

4. Hierarchy of control measures

The MHO Regulations set a hierarchy of measures under which the employer must:

- **Avoid** hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable
- **Assess** the risk of any hazardous manual handling operation, which cannot be avoided
- **Reduce** the risk of injury, so far as is reasonably practicable

4.1 Avoiding the Hazard

There may be a number of options for avoiding the need for manual handling. Examples include redesigning a process to avoid moving a load, or by automation or mechanisation.

4.2 Assessing the Risk

The regulations specify four factors that should be considered in any manual handling risk assessment:

- The Task
- The Load
- The Working Environment
- Individual Capability

The process steps for completing manual handling assessments may be described by way of a flow chart, provided below. Although some form of assessment, or judgement, of the risk should be made for every manual handling operation, the wide scope of the Regulations means that a detailed written assessment of every manual handling operation would be impractical, and would result in effort being diverted away from tasks where there may be a significant risk of injury.

The guidelines published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggest that the assessment need not be recorded in writing if:

1. It could very easily be repeated and explained at any time because it is simple and obvious.
2. The manual handling operations are quite straightforward, of low risk, are going to last only a very short time, and the time taken to record them would be disproportionate.

It must be noted that no manual handling task is risk free. Even operations which are identified as low risk should be avoided or made less demanding where this can reasonably be achieved.

4.3 Reducing the Risk

In attempting to reduce the risk it will usually be convenient to continue with the same structured approach used during the assessment, considering in turn the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability. The emphasis given to each of these factors may depend upon the nature and circumstances of the manual handling operation. Better job or workplace design may not eliminate handling injuries, but it can greatly reduce them and do so cost-effectively.

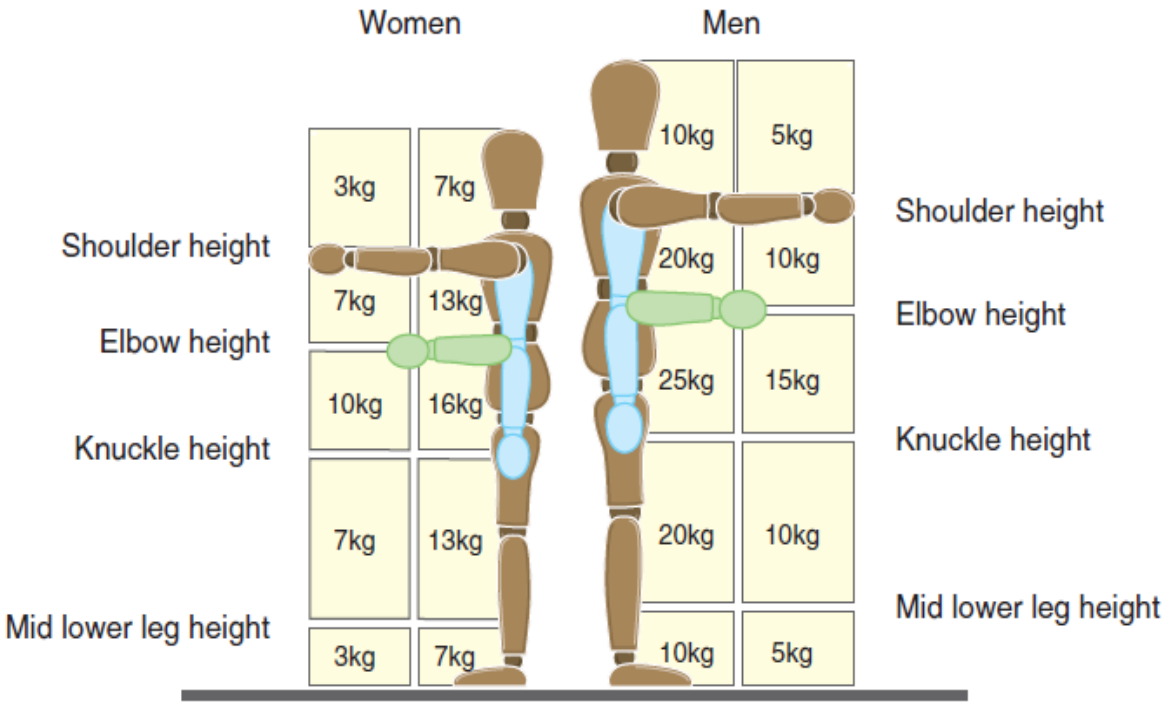
Consideration also needs to be given to the provision of mechanical assistance where this is reasonably practicable. Keep in consideration that mechanical handling aid will also introduce different risks. Examples of this might include such factors as driver training and traffic management, where forklift trucks are to be used; arrangements for routine examination and testing of lifting equipment; training of staff where cranes or other lifting machines are in use and

measures to protect against the possible mechanical and electrical hazards of powered equipment itself. It is expected that the existing arrangements for provision of protective footwear to staff routinely involved in manual handling will be adequate in most cases.

Where possible it is recommended that employees are involved in any redesign of the work system and changes to the workplace.

- **The regulations do not set specific requirements such as weight limits**. Numerical guidelines are provided setting out an appropriate boundary within which manual handling operations are unlikely to create a risk of injury sufficient to warrant a more detailed assessment
- *It is extremely important to recognise that these numerical guidelines are not 'safe weight limits'.*
- The figures given are not maximum limits, and may be exceeded where assessment of the operation suggests that it is safe to do so. Any operations where loads exceed the limits by more than a factor of two should come under very close scrutiny, even when carried out by fit, well-trained individuals. Evidence that an assessment of such operations has been made must be available.

5. HSE Numeric Guidelines – Lifting & Lowering



- This chart shows guideline figures for identifying when manual lifting and lowering operations of up to 30 times per hour may not need a detailed assessment. Whether or not a detailed assessment is required also depends on other risk factors:

- The application of these figures will provide a reasonable level of protection to around 95% of working men and women. There is no threshold below which manual handling is 'safe' for everyone.

HSE Numerical Guidelines See pg 10

- Where frequent heavy or specialised (e.g. team) lifting is routinely carried out, it is recommended that those involved in the work are provided with specialised training. Please consult Safety & Environmental Protection Services for advice on the training available.

- Where formal training is not regarded as essential, this guidance is adequate to illustrate the principles of good lifting and handling techniques.

Further advice and support

Further advice and support on design, risk assessment and use of computer workstations is available from Safety and Environmental Protection Services and from the University Health Service.

- **Safety and Environmental Protection Services (SEPS)**
  Tel: 0141 330 5532
  Email: safety@gla.ac.uk
  Website: http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/seps/index.htm

- **HSE publications**

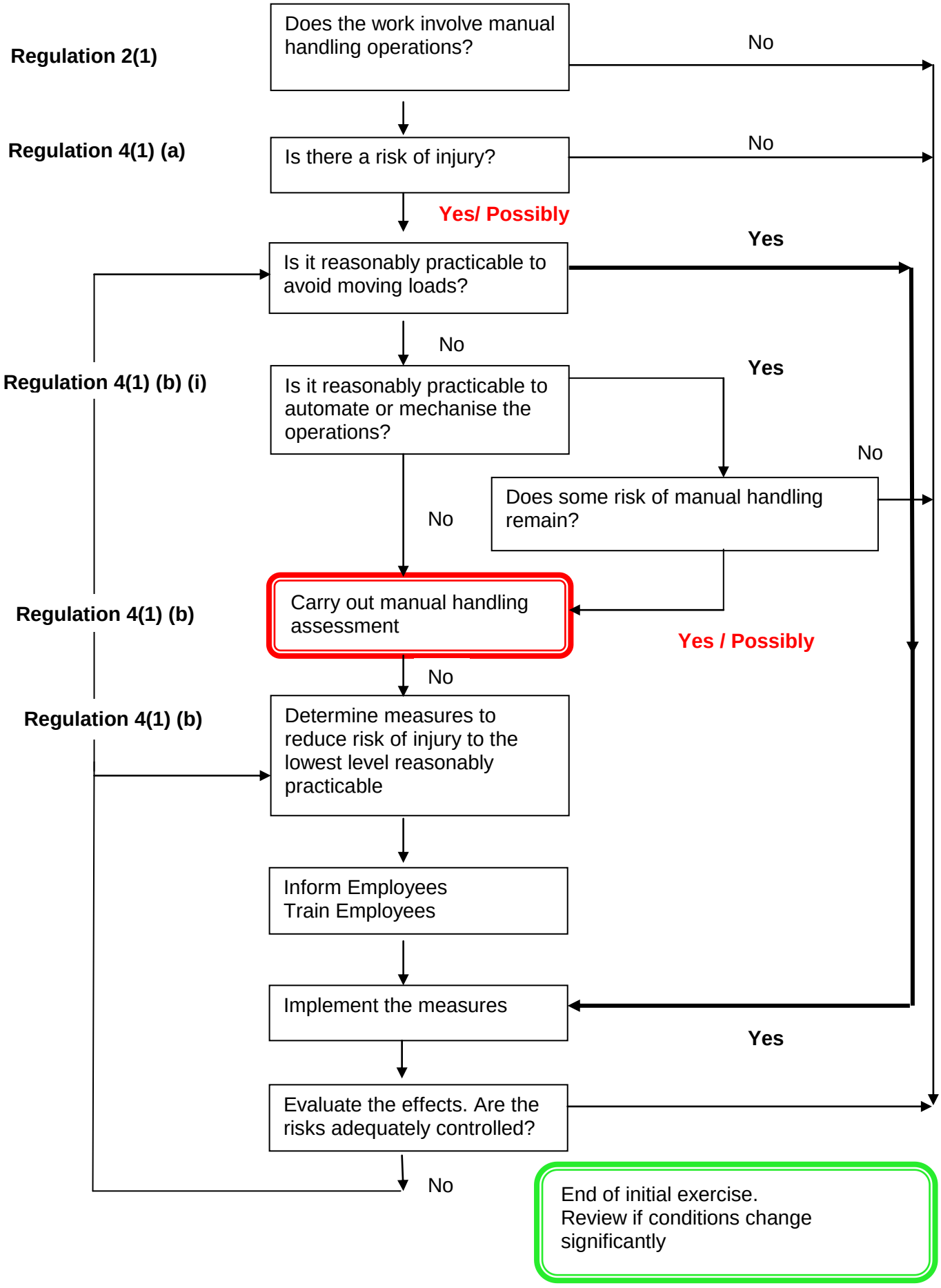
  a) http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf

  b) “Solutions you can handle”

  c) “A pain in your workplace”,

  d) Manual Handling: Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992: Guidance on the Regulations HSE Books L23

6. APPENDIX A: Manual Handling Risk Assessment Flow Chart



APPENDIX B: Notes for conducting a Manual Handling Risk Assessment

The following notes should be read in conjunction with the Manual Handling checklist. The purpose is to give some indication of the types of questions to consider when looking at a particular task. One of the first key questions is whether the task can be avoided (perhaps by arranging the work in some other way), mechanised or automated. Although these options may not always be available immediately, they should be considered carefully for future occasions when a similar task may need to be carried out.

Preparation

- What is being lifted?
- Where to and how far?
- How many people will be needed to move the load safely?
- Are they all trained in kinetic lifting and handling?
- What methods and equipment will be required?
- Is the required equipment available?
- Would mechanical means be more practical or appropriate?
- Is the lifting and handling area clear of hazards?
- Is the operation part of a routine? If so, could it be more effectively planned and executed?

Lifting and handling

- Is the proper clothing in use?
- Are proper (kinetic) lifting methods being employed?
- Is co-ordination satisfactory in dual and team lifting?
- Is the necessary equipment in use or to hand?
- Are excessively heavy weights being lifted?
- Are loads being deposited or stacked safely and securely?
- Is adequate supervision employed where necessary?

After lifting and handling

- Are any incidents or accidents reported and recorded?
- Where injuries have been sustained, has medical attention been sought?
- Is the damage or loss of equipment etc. recorded?

Does The Task Require Special Information or Training?

The risk to workers may be increased if they are unaware of basic information about the load (e.g. a possible risk of instability, abnormal centre of gravity), or if they do not understand the basic principles of safe manual handling techniques.

All staff should be aware of the following points:

- How to recognise potentially hazardous handling operations;
- How to deal with unfamiliar handling operations;
- The proper use of any handling aids that have been provided;
- The proper use of personal protective equipment;
- The importance of good housekeeping;
- Features of the working environment that contribute to safety;
- Factors affecting individual capability;
- Good handling technique.