

# LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

## MANUAL HANDLING PROCEDURE

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### 1 **PURPOSE**

Manual handling covers a wide range of activities undertaken by staff at the University. Most tasks involve some form of manual handling and in some cases they may be a risk of manual handling injuries such as muscle sprains and strains, injury to muscles, ligaments and intervertebral discs, soft tissue injury, abdominal pain and chronic pain.

As a significant number of workplace injuries are caused by manual handling, occupational health and safety regulations require employers to protect employees from the risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

This procedure provides guidance on the processes to be taken to identify assess and control manual handling tasks in work areas which could cause musculoskeletal disorders.

### 2. **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Manual handling**

Activities such as lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, throwing and carrying. It also includes repetitive tasks such as packing, typing, assembling, cleaning and sorting, using hand-tools, and operating machinery and equipment.

#### **Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)**

An injury illness or disease that arises in whole or part from manual handling in the workplace, whether occurring suddenly or over a long period of time.

#### **Hazardous manual handling**

Involves any of the following

- Repetitive or sustained application of force
- Repetitive or sustained awkward posture
- Repetitive or sustained movement
- Application of high force
- Exposure to sustained vibration
- Manual handling of live people or animals
- Manual handling of loads that are unstable, unbalanced or difficult to hold

#### **Task Analysis**

The methodical investigation of activities specific to a task.

### 3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Deans, Heads of Schools/Colleges and Divisional Managers are responsible for ensuring that:
- Each position involving manual handling is assessed to identify any tasks that may involve hazardous manual handling.

- Any identified manual handling risks be eliminated or, if this is not practicable the risk is reduced.
- All records of manual handling risk assessments are maintained.

Some of the functions necessary to comply with the Regulations may be delegated to an appropriately trained and authorized person.

### 3.2 All employees have a responsibility and duty to:

- work safely, participate in hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control when requested by your employer
- follow any information, training and instruction received
- use the risk controls that have been provided.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### 4.1 Identification, Assessment and Control Process

- a) Identify all positions in your department /school which involve manual handling.
- b) Undertake a task analysis of each position identified in 4.1(a) and by examination of the postures, movements and forces involved in the task, the duration and frequency of the task and environment factors and assess if the task is hazardous and likely to cause a musculoskeletal injury. Refer to the assessment checklist 9.1 & 9.2
- c) Implement control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury through
  - Altering the workplace or the environmental conditions where manual handling tasks are carried out
  - Change the objects used to carry out the manual handling task
  - Alter the systems of work used to carry out the manual handling task
  - Use of mechanical aids.

Note: If none of the above controls are practicable, information training or instruction in manual handling techniques may be used to control the risk.
- d) Where the risk assessment indicates a risk of MSD, records of the method used to assess the risk and the results of the assessment must be kept.

## 5. INFORMATION INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

Employees should have an understanding of the nature of hazardous manual handling, the risks associated with tasks involving hazardous manual handling and the reasons why risk controls have been set in place and how to use them.

Manual handling information, instruction and training must be given to employees who:

- Carry out manual handling tasks as well as managers, supervisors and health and safety representatives.
- Select and purchase tools and equipment to be used in manual handling tasks
- Design manual handling tasks or systems of work, or the layout of a workplace where manual handling is carried out
- Are involved in identifying hazardous manual handling and the assessment and control of musculoskeletal risks.

The OHS Section is able to assist in the assessment process and the provision of manual handling training.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

The Regulations require employers to consult with the health and safety representative if practicable when undertaking hazard identification risk assessment and risk control processes. By drawing on the experience, knowledge and ideas of employees you are more likely to develop effective risk control measures.

## **7. REFERENCES**

OH&S Act 2004  
OH&S Manual Handling Code of Practice 2000

## **8. CROSS REFERENCES**

La Trobe University OHS Risk Identification Assessment and Control

## **9. DOCUMENTATION**

- 9.1 Hazard Identification –Manual Handling
- 9.2 Manual Handling Risk Assessment
- 9.3 Manual Handling Risk Control

This procedure has been endorsed by the Executive Occupational health and Safety Committee at its meeting on 2 December 2002.

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