

LIFTING OR HANDLING CHILDREN AND LOADS

# GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

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## LEGISLATION

* Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

* Identify all lifting and handling operations that may have to be undertaken
* Identify staff members that will have to lift and handle loads or children
* Where possible eliminate the need to lift or handle loads or children
* If possible automate or mechanise the lifting and handling operation
* Complete a preliminary assessment if lifting and handling cannot be avoided
* Where there is a significant risk, complete a detailed risk assessment
* Reduce the risk by adapting the load, task or environment
* Provide appropriate lifting or handling aids
* Provide appropriate training to staff members who have to lift or handle loads or children
* Ensure that new staff are fit and capable of lifting and handling
* Keep records of assessments and training provided

## INTRODUCTION

The legal definition of manual handling in terms of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR), is ‘any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force’.

Up to one third of all accidents at work are caused by moving and handling loads. These accidents may result in strain injuries to all parts of the body, but the back is the area most vulnerable to damage.

Other areas of the body which may sustain injury are the hands, feet, arms and shoulders. Injuries may also be caused if a load is dropped, for example, on the foot.

Some injuries arise from accumulated strain over a number of years and are never reported as accidents.

**It is the policy of Hammersmith and Fulham Council to ensure that employees avoid manual handling at work as far as is reasonably practicable.**

**Head teachers and/or business managers must ensure that the task is assessed and the risks to health and safety are minimised, as far as is reasonably practicable, by the provision of suitable lifting equipment, training, safe systems of work etc.**

## IDENTIFYING LIFTING AND HANDLING ACTIVITIES

Manual handling takes place everyday in schools and will include:

* The lifting and handling of boxes, equipment, tools, paper, desks, tables
* The lifting and handling of pupils

Observation of work activities, talking to staff and looking at Job Descriptions may identify activities that involve handling and lifting. An analysis of the school’s accidents/sickness records may also help to identify any lifting and handling issues that may not come immediately to mind.

Examples of operations in schools which may require assessments will be:

* moving furniture around in classrooms
* taking deliveries of assorted sized items
* moving equipment stored at awkward heights
* pushing and pulling trolleys and P.E. equipment
* carrying dangerous items such as chemicals and glassware
* setting up temporary stages
* moving temporary gas heater cabinets and cylinders

## HANDLING AND LIFTING CHILDREN

Regular, manual lifting and handling of children, particularly those with physical disabilities, can present significant risk to both the child and the staff undertaking the activity. The following principles should be followed:

* Establishments should determine the need for lifting and handling children and have in place an appropriate policy to this effect.
* Only those staff whose contract of employment requires them to lift children should undertake this activity
* Where reasonably practicable, aids for lifting and moving should be utilised to reduce the risk to a minimum.
* Children with specific needs should have lifting requirements included in their personal care plan
* If a child does not have a personal care plan but requires lifting and moving on a regular basis a suitable manual handling plan should be drawn up
* Any staff handling and lifting children should receive appropriate training

Care plans should include details of any equipment used to assist moving the child, such as the use of a wheelchair or mobile hoist or an evacuation chair in an emergency. Suitable training must be given to anyone who will be required to use any such equipment.

## ELIMINATE, AUTOMATE OR MECHANISE THE ACTIVITY

When trying to avoid manual handling the first questions to ask are whether the load/s need to be handled at all, or could the work be done in a different way?

If, so far as is reasonably practicable, handling of the load cannot be avoided, then can the operation/s be either automated or mechanised?

Mechanical assistance involves the use of handling aids - some manual handling is retained but bodily forces are applied more efficiently, reducing the risk of injury. There are many examples:

* A simple lever can reduce the risk of injury by decreasing the bodily force required to move a load, or by removing fingers from a potentially damaging trap;
* A hoist, either powered or hand-operated, can support the weight of a load and leave the handler free to control its position;
* A trolley, sack truck or roller conveyor can greatly reduce the effort required to move a load horizontally;
* Chutes are a convenient way of using gravity to move loads from one place to another;
* Handling devices such as hand-held hooks or suction pads can simplify the problem of handling a load that is difficult to grasp.

## RISK ASSESSING THE ACTIVITIES

Where manual handling operations cannot be avoided, employers have a duty to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health.

Assessment may best be carried out by members of staff who are familiar with the operations in question, as long as they have the competencies to do so. Those responsible for assessment should be familiar with the main requirements of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and have the ability to:

* Identify hazards (including less obvious ones) and assess risks from the type of manual handling being done
* Use additional sources of information on risks as appropriate
* Draw valid and reliable conclusions from assessments and identify steps to reduce risks
* Make a clear record of the assessment and communicate the findings to those who need to take appropriate action, and to the worker(s) concerned
* Recognise their own limitations as to assessment so that further expertise can be called on if necessary

The broad structure provided in the guidance document on lifting and handling assessments can be followed.

## REDUCING THE RISKS

Wherever possible full consideration should be given to the task, the load, the working environment, individual capability, other factors and the relationship between them, with a view to fitting the operations to the individual rather than the other way around.

Where an assessment identifies that the use of lifting aids would significantly reduce the risk of injury to staff, this equipment must be provided and staff must be given suitable training in its use. The equipment must also be regularly inspected and maintained as required by legislation.

Further information on reducing the risks can be found in the Health and Safety Guidance detailed below.

## TRAINING

**Training in lifting techniques is no substitute for eliminating, automating or mechanising lifting and handling.**

**Training is not a substitute for adapting the task, the load or the work environment.**

For those whose jobs involves a significant amount of moving and handling, Headteachers and/or Managers must ensure that these staff receive the appropriate level of training and refresher training.

Where lifting and handling of children is involved, specialist training should be undertaken.

Further advice on training and training providers can be sought from Children’s Services or the Corporate Safety Team.

## RECORD KEEPING

Suitable records in relation to manual handling should be kept. This will include:

* An inventory of lifting and handling activities
* An inventory of manual handling equipment
* Record of handling and lifting training undertaken
* Lifting and handling risk assessment completed

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on lifting and handling can be found at: [www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm)