

Hazardous Manual Tasks

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Introduction

This procedure outlines the management of risks to health and safety associated with hazardous manual tasks in order to prevent musculoskeletal disorders.

Definition

A musculoskeletal disorder (MDS), as defined in the WHS Regulations, means an injury to, or a disease of, the musculoskeletal system, whether occurring suddenly or over time. It does not include an injury caused by crushing, entrapment (such as fractures and dislocations) or cutting resulting from the mechanical operation of plant.

Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- implementing this procedure in their area of responsibility
- ensuring hazardous manual tasks are identified
- completing risk assessments to control hazards
- ensuring employees, Health and Safety Representatives and others are consulted in relation to the hazards, the development and implementation of risk control measures.

Employees are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury
- reporting hazards associated with manual tasks and consulting with Line Managers and Supervisors in relation to appropriate risk control measures
- reporting hazards in the online Hazard/Incident Reporting & Investigation system that cannot be immediately controlled and require further investigation.

Role of the Health and Safety Representatives:

- assisting Line Managers and employees in the identification and assessment of health and safety risks associated with manual tasks
- assisting with the implementation and review of risk control measures to prevent MDS.

Procedure

The Code of Practice for Hazardous Manual Tasks explains how to identify hazardous manual tasks, assess the risks of musculoskeletal disorders and eliminate or minimise those risks. Guidance is also relevant for designers, manufacturers, importers or suppliers of equipment, materials and tools used for work, as well as designers of workplaces where manual tasks are carried out.

A hazardous manual task means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:

- repetitive or sustained force
- high or sudden force
- repetitive movement
- sustained or awkward posture
- exposure to vibration.

These factors (known as characteristics of a hazardous manual task) directly stress the body and can lead to injury.

Work tasks involving hazardous manual tasks at all University workplaces shall be identified in accordance with the WHS Procedure – Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks. Hazards shall be eliminated where reasonably practicable. Where elimination is not possible, a risk assessment shall be completed using the identification, assessment and control process outlined in the Code of Practice for Hazardous Manual Tasks as a guide.

The preferred strategy for the control of hazardous manual tasks is to:

- eliminate risk or where possible re-design the tasks to remove as much as possible the manual elements identified to be a significant risk, and
- where possible provide mechanical aids to assist staff and others to safely perform the tasks.

Where work requirements are such that manual tasks remain a component of the work process, manual task training may compliment the control measures selected to minimise risk. Training principles include correct biomechanics and posture and the methods needed to do the work safely. Refer to the online Manual Handling training module.

Workplaces shall record hazards and associated control measures in form WHS 1 – Hazard Register and review controls regularly to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

Documents/Forms

Further advice on managing risks in university workplaces, including supporting documents and training courses are available on the Safety & Wellbeing website.

- [WHS Procedure - Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks](#)
- [WHS Procedure – Hazard/Incident Reporting & Investigation](#)
- [WHS Guideline – Managing Hazards Manual Tasks \(Identification, Assessment & Control\)](#)
- [WHS01 – Hazard Register](#)
- [Hazard/Incident Reporting & Investigation system](#)
- [Online Manual Handling training module](#)

References

- [WHS Act & Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#)
- [WHS46 – Hazardous Manual Tasks – Code of Practice 2011](#)