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Manual Handling

Manual handling causes over a third of all workplace injuries. These include work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's) such as pain and injuries to arms, legs and joints, and repetitive strain injuries of various sorts.

The term manual handling covers a wide variety of activities including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying. If any of these tasks are not carried out appropriately there is a risk of injury.

Why is dealing with manual handling important?

Manual handling injuries can have serious implications for the employer and the person who has been injured. They can occur almost anywhere in the workplace and heavy manual labour, awkward postures, repetitive movements of arms, legs and back or previous/existing injury can increase the risk.

What do I have to do?

To help prevent manual handling injuries in the workplace, you should avoid such tasks as far as practically possible. However, where it is not possible to avoid handling a load, employers must look at the risks of that task and put sensible health and safety measures in place to prevent and avoid injury.

For any lifting activity, always take into account:

- Individual capability
- The nature of the load
- Environmental conditions
- Training
- Work organisation

If you need to lift something manually:

- Reduce the amount of twisting, stooping and reaching
- Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads
- Adjust storage areas to minimise the need to carry out such movements
- Consider how you can minimise carrying distances
- Assess the weight to be carried and whether the worker can move the load safely or needs any help - maybe the load can be broken down to smaller, lighter components

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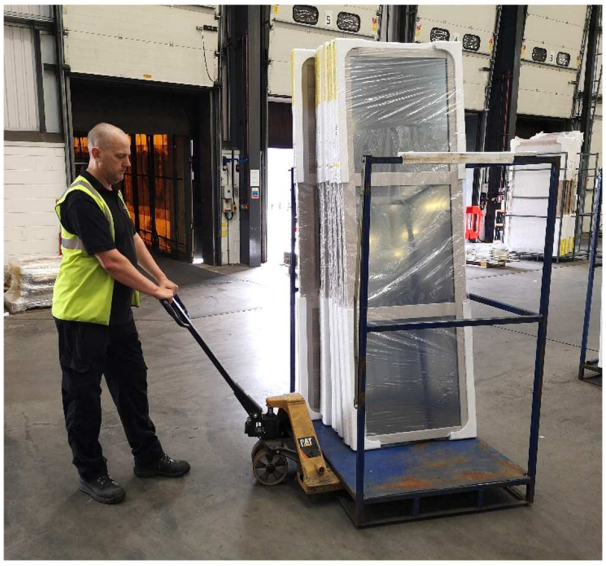
If you need to use lifting equipment:

- Consider whether you can use a lifting aid, such as a trolley, forklift truck, electric hoist, or a telehandler. A pump truck can be used to wheel stillages to the van, where available:



- Always try and park your van near or directly outside the collection warehouse/hub or plot on site, wherever possible to avoid carrying the material over long distances:

- Use toolboxes with wheels to minimise lifting:

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- Consider using a back support belt. These can be worn over clothing and offer full support to the abdomen and lower back, whilst helping reinforce the spine. They are fully adjustable and do not restrict movement:

- Engage with site labour to assist with awkward lifts, where required:

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Good handling techniques and factors for lifting

There are some simple things to do before and during the lift/carry:

- **Assess the access and egress to your work area** to ensure that this is safe. Remove obstructions from the route, where possible
- **Be vigilant regarding weather conditions,** particularly wind and ice, which can make manual handing more challenging
- **Think before lifting/handling.** Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip
- **Adopt a stable position.** The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain your stability
- **Ensure a good hold.** Where possible, the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only. For a long lift, plan to rest the load midway on a solid and stable surface to change grip. Always wear gloves when handling materials
- **Start in a good posture.** At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting)
- **Do not flex the back any further while lifting.** This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load
- **Keep the load close to the waist.** Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it
- **Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent**. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time
- **Keep the head up when handling.** Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely
- **Move smoothly.** The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury
- **Do not lift or handle more than can be easily managed.** There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.
- **Put down, then adjust.** If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position, where possible

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Always use the L.I.T.E. approach to help you accurately risk assess loads before manual handling:

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Handling:

Once the door is removed from the stillage, ensure it is picked up with **both hands placed on either side stile** and carry as demonstrated in images below:

Some doors may require a two-person lift. When carrrying a door using two people, it should be handled as shown in the below image. Both hands should be used to support both sides of the door with the door supported horizontally throughout the lift:

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Poor Handling Examples:

Above are poor examples of door handling. Picking the door up as demonstrated in the first three images will cause the door to flex, increasing the risk of the glass cracking. It is also unstable, and visibility is restricted, increasing the risk of injury. In the fourth image you can see the door being supported on its corner and pushed along on its corner to reduce handling. This is also not accepted and can again increase the risk of damage and injury.