

Manual Handling Operation is any transporting or supporting of a load, including the lifting, lowering, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, by hand or by bodily force. Picking up and carrying a toolbox or a step ladder or even picking up a screwdriver or hammer, or a set of stocks, is manual handling, just as unloading and positioning a boiler might be. Anything from the extremely light to something requiring your maximum strength is included.



Manual Handling accounts for a large number of accidents each year and many millions of 'days off' are due to back and other injuries. Once someone's back has been weakened by injury it is often a recurring problem for the rest of that person's life.

a. All Manual Handling Operations are governed by the Manual Handling Operations Regulations. Employees have a duty to make full and proper use of anything provided by an employer in connection with manual handling.

This includes following any advice and training given on lifting etc.

b. An employer's duties can be summarized as – Avoid the need for manual handling wherever possible. Assess the risk. Reduce the need by providing mechanical aids. Train staff in good Manual Handling techniques.

### Basic Rules for safe Manual Handling

1. Think before lifting! Is it heavy (above 16kg) is it large or awkward?, where is the center of gravity?, can you manage it alone?
2. Use the strong muscles and bones of your legs, not the complex and vulnerable ones in your back.
3. Make sure you have a firm grip of the load and that you can sustain the grip for the duration of the lift. Wear industrial gloves to improve grip and protect hands from sharp edges.
4. Make sure you know where you are going to put the load and that the way is clear of obstacles and not slippery. The load must not impede your forward view.
5. If in doubt, get help! There's nothing macho about a slipped disc!



### Lifting Technique

1. Tuck chin in. This keeps back as straight as possible and therefore least vulnerable.
2. Feet as close to load as possible, about a hip width apart, one foot slightly in front.
3. Bend the knees and crouch down.
4. Take a full grip, using palms, not fingertips.
5. With elbows tucked in, straighten the leg, lifting smoothly.
6. Carry the load forward at waist height.
7. Change direction by turning on you feet, not by twisting the trunk.
8. Put down in the same careful way and continue being careful as you straighten up.

