

Manual handling assessment charts (MAC): FAQs

Information sheet 5

This sheet will help you understand the purpose of MAC. It answers some common questions about the tool itself and signposts further information. There is a copy of MAC in this pack.

Q Why was MAC developed?

A It was developed by HSE to identify risk factors for three types of manual handling – lifting, carrying and team handling operations. MAC was first produced to help HSE inspectors develop their knowledge and confidence in tackling manual handling issues. MAC also helps assessors to prioritise tasks for improvement.

Q Can safety representatives and workers themselves use MAC?

A Yes. MAC is easy to use. Anyone in the workplace can use it. Ideally workers, representatives and managers should take part in assessments to ensure that everyone is involved in identifying risks.

Q. Where can I get more help on MAC?

A On the Better Backs CD in this pack there are training case studies in the form of PowerPoint presentations with embedded videos and speakers' notes. You can also find interactive material on the HSE MSD website.

Q How can I get further copies of MAC?

A MAC is available from HSE Books, free of charge for single copies and priced for multiple copies. MAC can also be printed from the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf.



Q How does MAC fit in with the Risk Assessment Filter and Checklist provided in the guidance on Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)?

A Although MAC can be useful when completing the risk assessment checklist for handling situations, provided in the guidance on the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended), it is not appropriate for all manual handling operations and does not cover all risk factors, eg pushing and pulling. This means that MAC alone may not comprise a fully 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment if relied on alone. *Getting to grips with manual handling: A short guide* Leaflet INDG143(rev2) HSE Books 2004 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2828 0) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf, which is in this pack, gives help on assessment and pushing and pulling.

Q What is the role of the MAC scores? What do they indicate?

A The total score can be used to prioritise action. Two or more tasks can be compared. Higher scores present more risk and should be tackled first. They are also useful for indicating how successful changes have been in reducing the score.

Q If a manual handling task involves lifting and then carrying, what should I assess?

A Ideally both, but after some experience of using MAC you should be able to judge which of the task elements poses the greater risk.

Q How do I interpret the load weight/frequency graph for women workers?

A For simplicity the load weight/frequency graphs presented are applicable to men and women. The guidance on Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) provides more information on guideline weights for both men and women.

Q Can MAC be used to assess tasks that involve handling people?

A Although the risk assessment principles embodied in MAC apply to all handling situations, MAC was not designed with patient handling in mind, and therefore may not be appropriate for patient handling risk assessments. You need to consider a greater range of risk factors when assessing handling people and consult more specific guidance.

Want to know more?

For further information about risk factors, assessments and controls, pushing and pulling, handling technique and law, please see the following HSE publications in this pack:

Manual handling assessment charts Leaflet INDG383 HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2741 1) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf

Getting to grips with manual handling: A short guide Leaflet INDG143(rev2) HSE Books 2004 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2828 0) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf

Are you making the best use of lifting and handling aids? Leaflet INDG398 HSE Books 2004 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2900 7) Web version: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg398.pdf

Lifting aids price guide (in this pack)

For more information on manual handling regulations, please refer to *Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended). Guidance on Regulations L23* (Third edition) HSE Books 2004 ISBN 0 7176 2823 X

For more information about tackling back pain and the Better Backs campaign, visit: betterbacks.hse.gov.uk or phone HSE's Infoline on: 0845 345 0055

For more information on managing sickness absence, visit: www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence

For more information on involving workers in health and safety management, visit: www.hse.gov.uk/involvement

For free practical advice on health, safety and return to work issues please contact Workplace Health Connect on: 0845 609 6006