

Manual handling training courses

Better Backs campaign

Information sheet 6

Manual handling is a major cause of back pain. Avoid or reduce the manual handling risk first, then consider training to further reduce the risk. This sheet lists what a good training course should cover.

Basic requirements

The law does not set out a syllabus for manual handling training, but a good course will cover the areas set out below. The following questions may help you select or design a suitable training course.

General

Does the course:

- Give trainees the skills to identify risk, solutions and good handling techniques to apply if faced with an unfamiliar task?
- Suit the individual needs of the trainees by reflecting the handling activities they do and the places where the manual handling is done?
- Use relevant examples to show how to lift correctly? This may mean that the course needs to be industry/activity-specific, if the nature of the handling is very specific, eg baggage handling at airports.
- Give a good understanding of the additional points set out below?
- Last long enough to meet these general needs and to cover the content described? Often this will mean about half a day or more; anything less than an hour is not likely to cover all the relevant information.



Content

Does it include:

- Basic information about the back and how to look after it?
- The key risk factors relating to the load, task, environment and individual capability and how those factors are present in that industry and workplace?
- How to avoid manual handling and reduce risk factors?
- Factors relating to the individual such as the capability to adopt the posture required for safe lifting, eg bending the knees? For further information see *Getting to grips with manual handling* in this pack.
- Basic principles of safe moving and handling and their application in the workplace to equip workers with the skills to review and deal with unfamiliar tasks?

- Demonstration and practice of lifting and handling techniques, such as planning the lift, feet position for stability/balance, posture, keeping load close to the body, moving the feet instead of twisting the trunk? This should give trainees the skills to identify risk, solutions and good handling techniques, if faced with a new task.
- Demonstration and practice in safe use of lifting equipment/handling aids, if applicable?
- Practical handling work to allow the trainer to see and put right any unsafe practice by trainees?
- The company procedure for reporting injuries and what action will be taken if a member of staff is injured?

Other things to consider

- Has the trainer asked for information about your company's handling activities etc, before they start the training? If a trainer has not asked these questions, the course may not be suitable for the people doing the handling, reflect the tasks and places where the manual handling is done and use relevant examples.
- Training sessions should be followed up to make sure individuals understand the material and are able to put the things they have learnt into practice.
- Are records kept that show who requires training and who has received training, when it took place, what was covered and what follow-up is needed?

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