

Better Backs in Construction

Speaker's Name

Better Backs

Some figures:

- 2 million people in GB suffered work related ill health in 2004/5
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the biggest cause of occupational ill health in GB
- Around 45% of MSDs involved the back



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- Has the highest rate of MSDs
- These are mostly back injuries from manual handling
- 56,000 Work Related MSD cases in construction per annum
- RIDDOR “handling”
(to employees in 2004/2005)
 - ❖ 38% of over 3 day injuries
 - ❖ 15% of major injuries



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The 3 year targets

- To reduce the number of new case of musculoskeletal disorder by 8%
- To reduce days lost from work related ill health by 9%

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We achieve this by (1):

- Working together to make a difference
- Increase the use lifting aids where possible
- Maintain a good posture
- Avoid unnecessary twisting and bending

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We achieve this by (2) :

- Promote the stay active message
- employers and employees work together to get people with back pain back into normal activities
- Raising awareness and changing behaviour to make a difference

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In summary the main points are:

- Sensible precautions in the workplace to reduce the incidence and impact of back pain
- Stay active with back pain – often the best therapy
- “whatever your job, look after your back”

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What are musculoskeletal disorders?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) include conditions affecting:

- Muscles - tendons - ligaments - joints - nerves - soft tissues

Symptoms include:

- pain
- discomfort
- tenderness
- swelling
- impaired movement

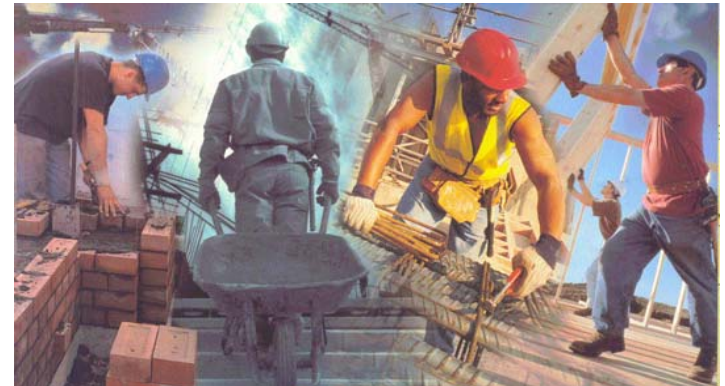


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Solutions to reduce MSDs at work?

HSE has concentrated much of its recent effort upon manual handling operations at work:

- Designers
- Planning Supervisors
- Principal Contractors
- Contractors
- Manufacturers / Suppliers



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Sensible solutions?

- Start with a risk assessment:
e.g. task - individual - load - environment
- Identify level and likelihood of risk
- Identify and implement controls:
- avoid - substitute - mechanise - train workers
- Then keep checking that the controls are effective

Ask these questions

- Can manual handling involving risk be **avoided**?
- Can tasks be **mechanised** or **handling/lifting aids** used?
- Can tasks be **altered** - to reduce the risk from twisting stretching or bending?
- Can loads be **changed** - to reduce weight or improve grip?
- Can the work area be **improved** to make room for handling?
- Have workers been **trained** in the use of equipment and safe handling?

Inspectors will in particular address the handling of:

- Kerbs
- Building Blocks
- Panel products e.g. Plasterboard
- Use of Lifting Aids e.g. for Lintels or drainage products (gully pots/manhole covers and frames)
- Bagged Aggregate

Kerbs – Bad Practice

- ✘ Not the way to do it!
- ✘ Poor posture
- ✘ Heavy weight
- ✘ Alternatives readily available



Kerbs

What alternatives are available?

- ✓ Hollow kerbs
- ✓ Plastic kerbs
- ✓ Shorter lengths cut in factory or yard
- ✓ Slip formed kerbs
- ✓ Handling aids

Kerb Handling – Good Practice

- Mechanical grab – or vacuum lifters -vehicle mounted



Kerb/Paving Handling Good Practice – vacuum lifters



Handling Building Blocks

- Specify/order blocks that weigh less than 20kg
- Store blocks where they will not get wet (and increase their weight)
- Arrange work so that lifting over shoulder height is not carried out
- Deliver blocks as close to the point of laying as possible



Panel products e.g. Plasterboard

- Plasterboard example weights:
- Sound and damp resistant board, 15.0mm thick ,1200x2400mm,(4'x8') **weighs 39.7kg**
- 'Standard' Wallboard, 12.5mm thick, 1200x2400mm,(4'x8') **weighs 24.5kg**
- **Carrying of 2 or 3 boards at a time has been encountered**

Panel products e.g. Plasterboard

- One possibility is to reduce the board width to 900mm
- 25% lighter
- narrower profile reduces the stretching, stooping and twisting, and allows the weight to be carried closer to the body.



Panel products e.g. Plasterboard

Could **lifting aids** be used?

e.g. using panel trolleys

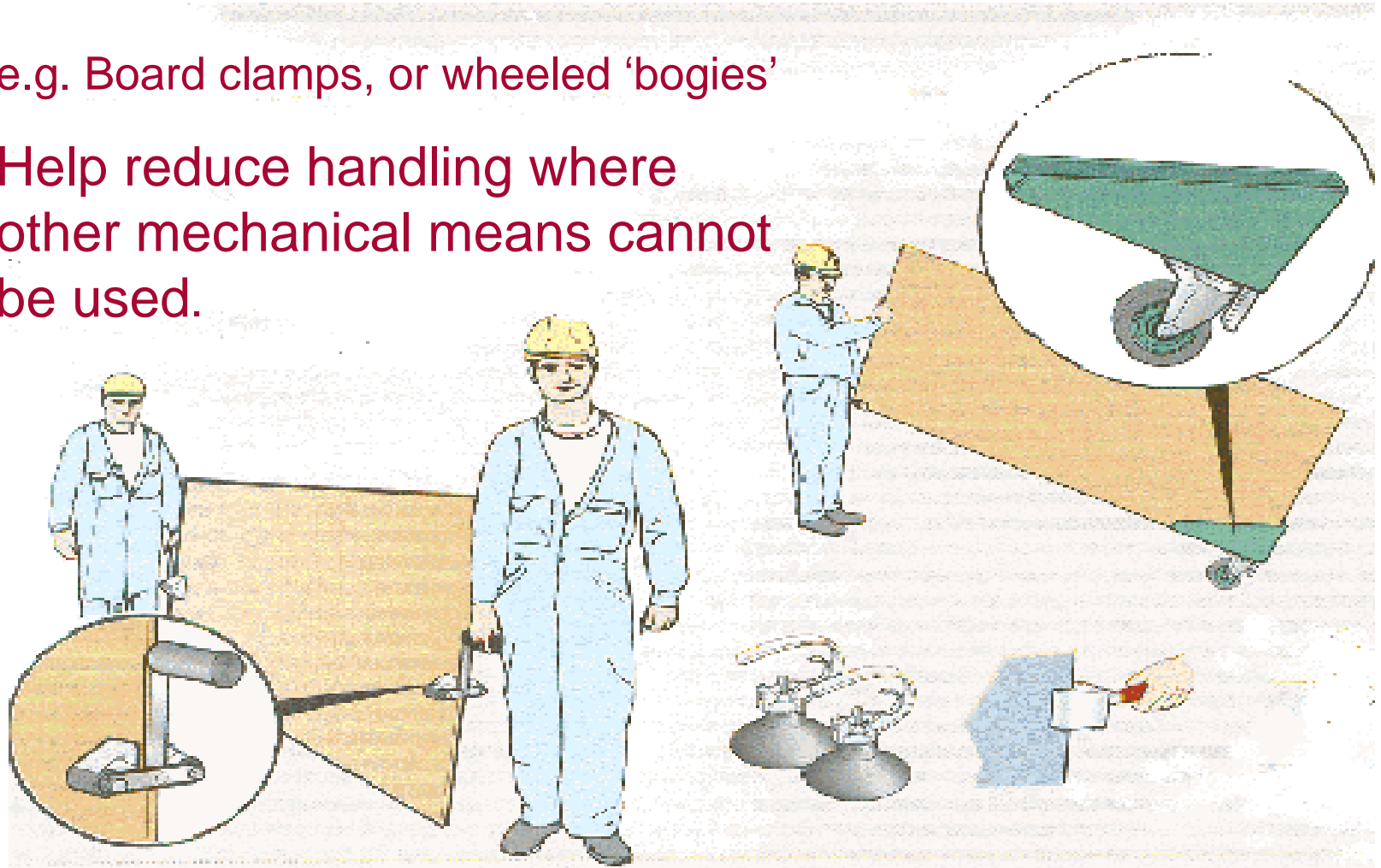


Panel products e.g. Plasterboard

Other simple aids

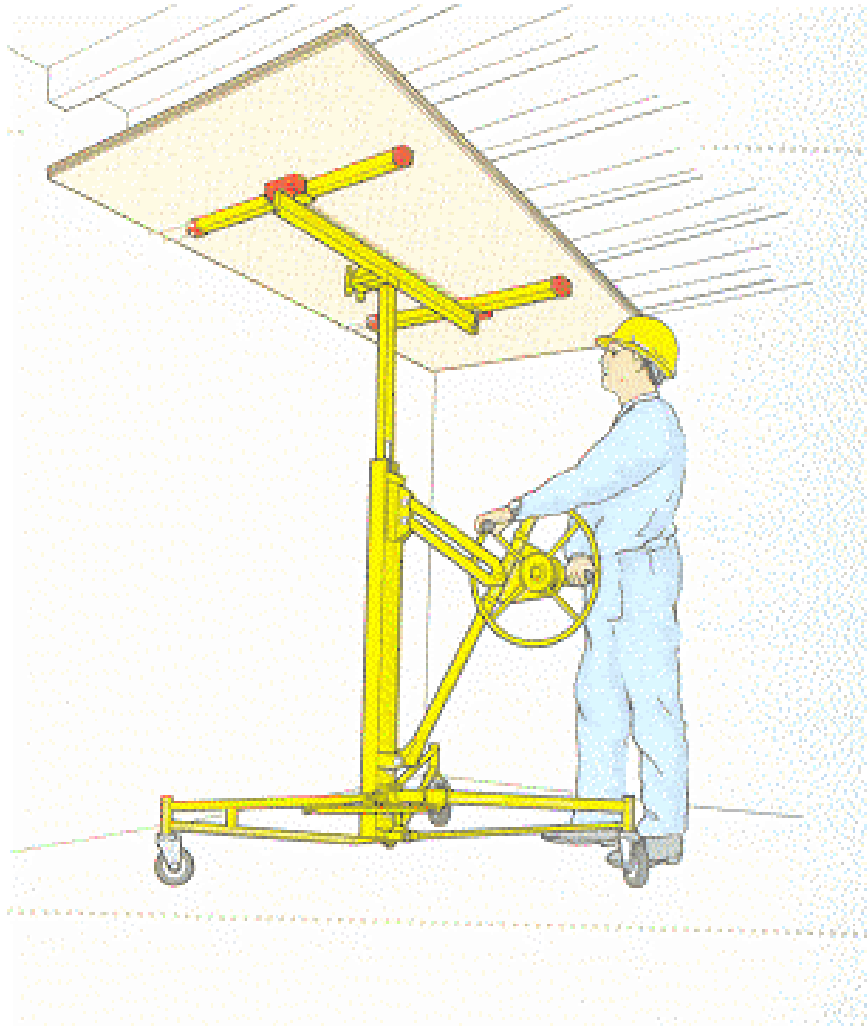
e.g. Board clamps, or wheeled 'bogies'

Help reduce handling where other mechanical means cannot be used.

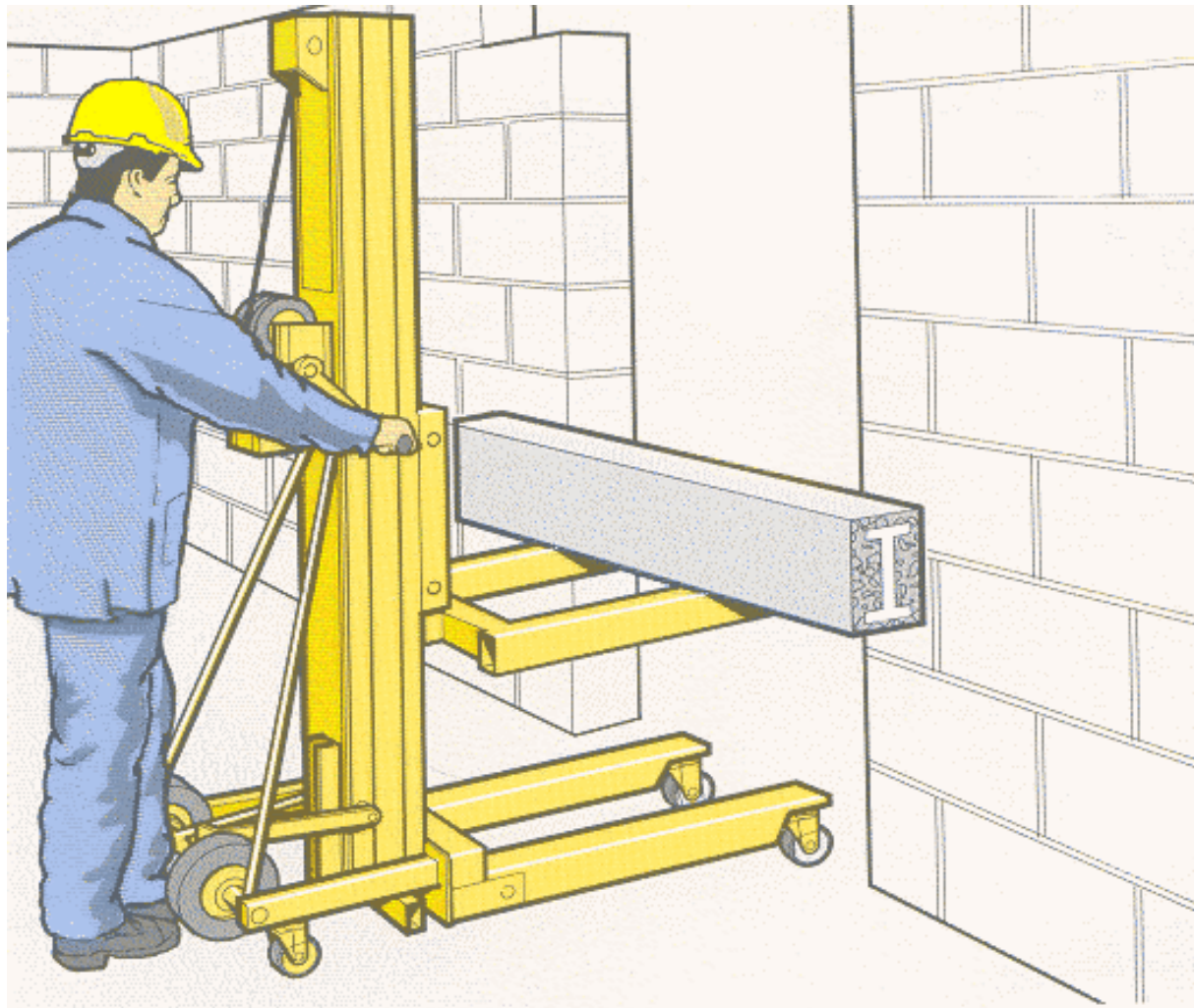


Panel products e.g. Plasterboard

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Use of Lifting Aids - Lintels



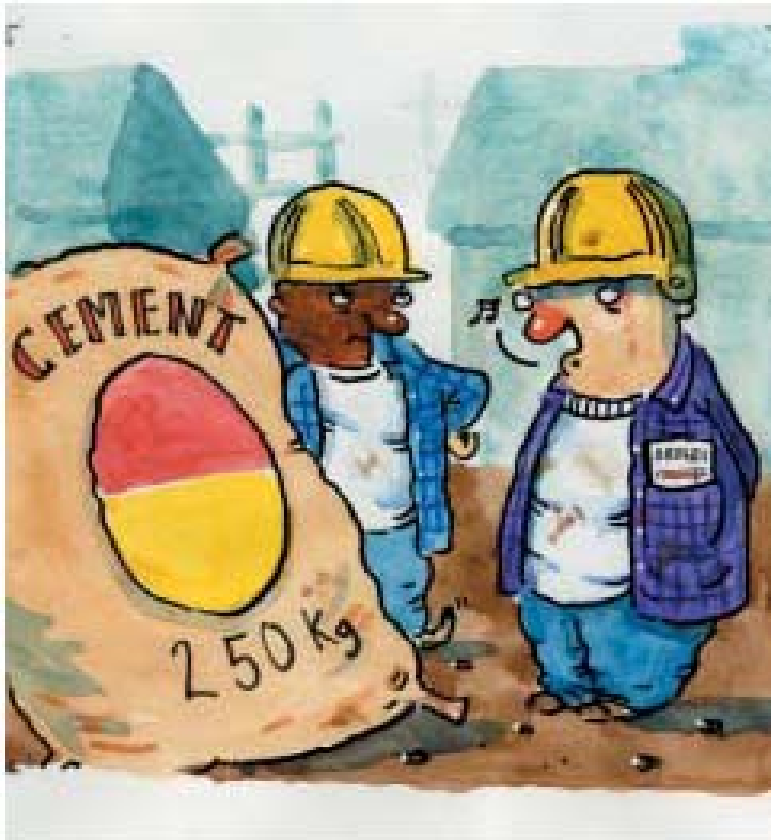
Use of Lifting Aids - manhole covers



Vehicle mounted or free-standing hoists



Better Backs Bagged Aggregate



...can you order materials such as cement and aggregates in 25 kg bags?

Order materials in smaller unit weights (max. 25kg) so that they can be more easily handled....OR

Order the materials in such large unit weights that they can only be handled mechanically.

Solutions -Top tips

- Do things that will work in your business to make a difference
- Identify activities which present a risk and examine how these can be made safer – the MAC tool can help
- Prioritise action – sort out the things that will have most impact first
- Keep it simple – choose sensible approaches and solutions
- Check solutions for new risks and that they work
- Involve workers or their representatives in all of these