

Leadership and worker involvement toolkit

Manual handling

One of the top five health risks arising from construction work

Checklist from Seven steps > Step 3 > Key tool > Health risks



Manager

- 1) Ensure your workers are provided with information and training on safe manual handling.
- 2) Consider whether you could use smaller blocks for the job.
- 3) Allow reasonable time for completion of tasks where manual handling is involved – injuries are more likely if workers are exerting themselves.
- 4) Consider whether lifting aids could help and ensure workers know how to use them.
- 5) Ensure safe working platforms are provided for lay-ing blocks above chest height, eg on a scaffold ‘hop-ups’ can be provided at 500 mm increments rather than the whole 2 m rise to each platform.

Worker

- 1) Take the time to work safely. Low level blocks may be awkward and will take longer to lay comfortably.
- 2) Keep blocks covered so they do not absorb rain water, which may add unnecessary extra weight.
- 3) Keep blocks close to the point of use.
- 4) Use any manual handling aids you are provided with.
- 5) Take time to organise your work so you can maintain a comfortable rate and avoid unnecessary bending or reaching, eg put spot mortar boards at a comfortable height.
- 6) Keep your work area free from obstructions.
- 7) Let your supervisor know if you are experiencing pain.

Links to HSE guidance

Manual handling and musculoskeletal disorders: www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthtopics/msd.htm

Planning – Prioritising decisions and managing risk

- 1) Eliminate the need for manual handling.
- 2) If manual handling is unavoidable, reduce it as far as possible by delivering blocks close to the point of use, using the lowest weight for the required performance and providing lifting aids where this can effectively reduce handling.
- 3) Improve posture during the laying of bricks by using safe working platforms for laying bricks above chest height.
- 4) Allow reasonable time for the job, as a safe rate of work will reduce the likelihood of injury. Blocks with a maximum weight of 20 kg will typically be laid at a rate of up to 20–30 units per hour. Allow more time for awkward jobs, such as low-lying blocks.
- 5) If the job still requires manual handling, consider whether some training and/or information would reduce the risk to employees. Training should aim to give employees the necessary skills to identify, assess and control risk at their work.
- 6) Keep the work area tidy to avoid extra trip hazards when manoeuvring blocks.

To download this checklist, complete the *Manual handling* case study, see:
Seven steps > Step 3 > Key tool > Health risks



Record your site briefing here

Who has been briefed:

I confirm that I have briefed these people on the key points of the LWIT Step 3 Key tool on manual handling.

Signed off by

Concerns raised at the briefing

Changes implemented or actions planned

The *Leadership and worker involvement toolkit* is aimed particularly at small and medium sized businesses and is designed to help improve your health and safety and bring additional benefits to your business performance and productivity. See: www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/

Developed by the construction industry's Leadership and Worker Engagement Forum. Hosted by HSE 08/11