

	Procedure People – Work Health and Safety	
	Manual Handling	WHS-PRO-4.01-01

Scope

This procedure applies to all SDN Board members, staff members, volunteers, students and contractors and contains general principles and practices for reducing the risk of workplace injury through manual handling tasks.

Procedure Details

General

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining. Manual handling also includes sustained, awkward or repetitive movements.

If completed incorrectly or poorly designed, then manual handling becomes hazardous and result in a workplace injury.

- ensure good housekeeping by maintaining uncluttered walkways, and even, non-slip floors at all times
- ensure there is adequate space and lighting to carry out the manual handling task.

Posture

The back is particularly vulnerable to manual handling injuries. The following personal control measures should be implemented:

- aim to keep your back in its natural curve during all tasks and postures
- when lifting and carrying, bend at your knees to lift and keep the load as close to your body as possible
- avoid twisting when holding a load, keep load under 10 kgs and turn by moving your feet
- all postures held for long periods of time have the possibility to incur a manual handling injury. Change tasks or posture and stretch frequently to relieve your muscles
- avoid repetitive bending and replace with squat, semi-squat, lunge or side lunge, kneel or sit to reach child levels
- use furniture, pillows, cushions to support back when sitting on the floor
- remember to take adequate rest breaks and stretch during the day
- avoid sitting for long periods of time
- ensure printers, copiers, bins are located away from workstations to encourage change in posture
- request workstation ergonomic assessments and follow advice

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- follow principles of good posture when undertaking all tasks, i.e. keeping ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles in line (ESHKA)
- kneel rather than sit on the floor - sitting on the floor in any position places strain on your back because the back curve cannot be sustained. Reaching forward to undertake any activity puts your back in a fully flexed position, i.e. at most risk
- kneel down, squat or lunge instead of bending, e.g. to hear what a child is saying, to tie a shoelace.

Lifting and carrying

- assess and plan the lift if required
- seek assistance if the load is more than 10 kilos or requires support
- use a wide base of support for lifting - legs apart, not together
- lift with your legs instead of your back, i.e. squat down instead of bending over to lift
- bring the weight close to your body when lifting and carrying
- use your lower abdominal muscles.
- place one foot in the direction you are facing and one in the direction you wish to face and then move your whole body rather than twisting at the waist
- move your feet when twisting - take steps
- keep the weight of the load close to your body at all times during carrying
- encourage children who can walk to use child steps
- warm up before and during the day
- encourage children to use the stairs to climb onto nappy change benches
- ensure sides of cots are lowered prior to lifting out or lowering in children to minimise bending and reaching over cot rails, thus avoiding manual handling injury.
- ensure beds are stacked away safely and not stored more than 8 high
- ensure all outdoor equipment is stored safely and with adequate space to avoid awkward manual handling positions when retrieving the equipment.

Child car restraints

- ensure parents to place and secure children into car restraints.

Office/administrative work

- use SDN preferred office furniture, i.e. adjustable chairs use a footstool if your feet cannot sit flat on the floor when seated at your workstation. Ensure frequently used equipment such as the phone and mouse is within easy reach and located on opposite sides of the workstation
- use a document holder for long periods of keying information

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- to avoid eye strain, take short rests and looking into the middle distance and/or close the eyes or cover them with your hands without pressing and breathe deeply eight or nine times
- avoid carrying paper copy of reference materials or documents in bags. Where possible, store materials and documents on USB or electronic devices.

Safe storage of equipment to reduce risk of injury

- store frequently used items and heavy items at waist to thigh height do not store equipment on the floor unless it has wheels, e.g. trolleys or bikes
- use stepladders to access equipment stored at height
- label storage well to avoid extra lifting and stretching to find out what is inside
- label items requiring team lift.

Related SDN Document

Policy

- WHS-HLP-4.01: Work Health and Safety

Relevant Legislation/Regulations

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
- NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incident Rules 2018

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