1. **Manual Handling**

1.1 As an integral part of the NIGALA’s Health & Safety Policy Statement all employees who are required to/are likely to be required to carry out Manual Handling of loads will be encouraged to develop an awareness of relevant health and safety issues.

2. **Definition**

2.1 The ‘manual handling of loads’ means any operation involving the movement or the supporting of a load by one or more workers.

2.2 Manual handling covers all aspects of the physical effort involved in the lifting, pushing and pulling of loads.

3. **Employer/Employee Responsibility**

3.1 Employers and employees have a responsibility to comply with health and safety guidelines relating to manual handling of loads as per the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. These regulations originally came into force on 1 January 1993 and implement the European Directive 90/269/European Economic Community (EEC), on the manual handling of loads. According to the European Directive 90/269/EEC the employer has to minimise the manual handling of loads by his workers (Art.4). In the event that handling is unavoidable, it is agreed:

- That the work must be evaluated (Art.5);
- That the risks must be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable;
- The work location must be properly fitted out and adapted (Art.6);
- That the worker must be informed and trained.

3.2 HSE Guidance advises employees are required to:

- Follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety;
- Make proper use of equipment provided for their safety;
- Cooperate with their employer on health and safety matters;
- Inform the employer if they identify hazardous handling activities;
- Take care to ensure that their activities do no put others at risk.

---

1 [http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/ocs/300-399/313_5.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/ocs/300-399/313_5.htm)
3 Information on other aspects of working safely regarding manual handling of loads can be found at [http://www.hseni.gov.uk/lighten_the_load.pdf](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/lighten_the_load.pdf)
4 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf)
3.3 Some people carrying out Manual Handling of loads risk suffering musculoskeletal problems. The majority of problems of this nature can be prevented by good workplace design and good working practices. It is therefore important for all employees to adhere to safe manual handling techniques when conducting manual handling of loads.

4. **SELF-EMPLOYED PANEL MEMBERS**

4.1 Self-employed panel members, along with employees, are advised to use the ‘Good Handling Technique for Lifting’ shown at section 6 when carrying out manual handling tasks. Footnotes contained in this bulletin provide links to further advice/guidance. Advice and guidance on manual handling can also be provided by the NIGALA Risk Assessors (James Lawne and Sinéad Casey).

5. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

5.1 Manual Handling risk assessments will be undertaken by employees who have undertaken risk assessment training.

The current NIGALA Risk Assessors are:

- James Lawne ext no. 269;
- Sinéad Casey ext no. 309.

5.2 Manual handling risk assessments will be conducted every three years or sooner if required, whichever is first, by NIGALA Risk Assessors i.e. if the assessment is no longer valid, if there has been a significant change in the manual handling operations.

5.3 Consultation with employees will take place during the risk assessment to help inform the assessment.

5.4 A manual handling risk assessment is carried out on a particular manual handling task i.e. a task that is common to several employees or to more than one site. This will be reviewed should individual employees report adverse symptoms, become ill, injured, disabled, or pregnant, or return following a long period of sickness as they may have become vulnerable to risk.

5.5 If required, individual manual handling risk assessments will be conducted for employees with a disability and to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, in particular part II, point 6: Duty of Employer to Make Adjustments.

---

6. GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUE FOR LIFTING

6.1 The duties prescribed under this bulletin are designed to ensure the safety of employees when conducting manual handling of loads.

6.2 Stop and think.
- Plan the lift.
- Where is the load to be placed?
- Can handling aids be used?
- Do you need help with the load?
- Remove obstructions.
- For a long lift, such as floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load mid-way on a table of bench to change grip.

6.3 Position the feet.
- Feet apart, giving a balanced and stable base for lifting.
- Leading leg as far forward as is comfortable and if possible, pointing in the direction you intend to go.

6.4 Adopt a good posture.
- When lifting from a low level, bend the knees, but do not kneel or over flex the knees.
- Keep the back straight, maintaining its natural curve (tucking in the chin helps).
- Lean forward a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.
- Keep the shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.

6.5 Get a firm grip.
- Try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs.
- The best position and type of grip depends on the circumstances and individual preference; but must be secure.
- A hook grip is less tiring than keeping the fingers straight.
- If you need to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do it as smoothly as possible.
6.6 Keep the load close to the waist.
- Keep the load close to the waist/body for as long as possible.
- Keep heaviest side of the load next to the body.
- If a close approach to the load is not possible, slide it towards you before trying to lift.

6.7 Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways.
- Avoid especially while the back is bent.
- Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips.
- Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

6.8 Keep the head up when handling.
- Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

6.9 Move smoothly.
- The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

6.10 Put down, then adjust.
- If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

7. General Risk Assessment Guidelines

7.1 Each box in the diagram below contains a guideline weight for lifting and lowering in that zone. Working within these guidelines will reduce risk and need for a more detailed assessment.

7.2 Observe the activity you are assessing and compare to the diagram. If the lifter’s hands enter more than one box during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between boxes. If the operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes, make a more detailed assessment.

7.3 The guideline weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the lifter in a stable body position.
8. **Training & Information**

8.1 All employees who are required to carry out manual handling tasks will be given adequate training and information necessary to enable them to carry out tasks safely and reduce risk of injury.

8.2 Manual handling training will be completed via elearning module as part of induction by those employees identified as conducting manual handling tasks and annually thereafter. The e-learning module can be access via the link below:

http://www.hscelearning.com/nigala/

8.3 The manual handling elearning module is also available to all employees including those who do not usually conduct manual handling tasks. If an employee who does not usually conduct manual handling tasks wishes to complete the training, it can be accessed via the above link.

8.4 Advice and guidance regarding manual handling can be sought from NIGALA Risk Assessors, Sinéad Casey and James Lawne.
## 9. Cross-Reference to Other Related Documents

This bulletin should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bulletin/Document</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BULLETIN 1</td>
<td>Risk Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
<td>NIGALA Risk Assessment Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>