

## WHS – Manual Handling Procedure

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Definitions

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)	Persons responsible for facilitating consultation and cooperation between management and workers on health and safety issues within the workplace. Defined by areas of responsibility and operation where worker numbers demand such consultation.
Manager	An individual worker's direct supervisor/manager.
Manual handling	Any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing.
MSD	Musculoskeletal Disorders. These injuries can result in discomfort or pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues.
Officer	An officer is a person who makes decisions, or participates in making decisions, that affect the whole (or a substantial part) of a business or undertaking and has the capacity to significantly affect the financial standing of the business or undertaking.
Others	Visitors to a workplace.
PCBU	Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking. The business or undertaking can operate for profit or not-for-profit. A PCBU can be a corporation, association, partnership, sole trader or a volunteer organisation that employs any person to carry out work.
Reasonably practicable	Reasonably practicable means actions that are (or were at a particular time) reasonable to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring</li><li>b) the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk</li><li>c) what relevant persons know, or reasonably ought to know, about the hazard or risk and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk</li><li>d) the suitable and available ways to eliminate or minimise the risk</li><li>e) after assessing the extent of the risk and the available control measures, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.</li></ul>

**Workers** A worker is anyone who carries out work for a PCBU, such as an employee, a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a labour hire organisation, an apprentice or trainee, a student gaining work experience, an outworker or a volunteer.

## 1.2 Purpose

NQ Excavator Hire acknowledges that we have a duty to ensure health and safety and are required to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety as far as reasonably practicable.

We recognise that the manual handling of materials, equipment and furniture within the workplace is potentially hazardous to health and safety.

## 1.3 Scope

This procedure is relevant to all workers of NQ Excavator Hire and others to ensure that the NQ Excavator Hire Work Health and Safety Policy is enforced. Procedure

## 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

### PCBU

The principal duty holder is a 'Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' (PCBU).

The PCBU's responsibilities include:

- Ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of workers and other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.
- Provide the highest level of protection that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, considering the gravity of the harm, its likelihood, the possible risk controls and, as a final resort, considering the costs of the various control options.
- Monitoring the health of their workers and the conditions of the workplace under their management and control to prevent injury or illness.
- The PCBU with management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace, the means of entering and exiting the workplace and anything arising from the workplace do not affect the health and safety of any person.

## Workers

Workers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and take reasonable care that their actions or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

A worker is required to follow procedures put in place for their health and safety. This may include following safety manuals and procedures, participating in safety training, wearing PPE and exercising a level of care and responsibility in your work.

Every worker at all levels of a business should:

- Take ownership of their own health and safety for matters that are within their control or ability to influence.
- Work with colleagues to promote health and safety and ensure that it becomes a part of everyday business.
- Contribute to providing quality information that enables the establishment of baseline compliance levels and measuring changes in compliance over time.
- Be accountable as an individual to enhance a culture of health and safety within the PCBU.
- Ensure that they meet duty of care obligations as required under work health and safety laws.

## Officers

Officers have a duty to exercise 'due diligence' to ensure that the PCBU complies with any duty or obligation. An officer must have high, yet attainable, standards of due diligence. These standards should relate to the position and influence of the officer within the PCBU.

An officer is responsible for the following:

- Be proactive and continuously ensure that the business or undertaking complies with relevant duties and obligations.
- Ensure that delegations are working effectively.
- Ensure engagement and leadership by officers and management.
- Continuously examine and ensure that the resources and systems of the PCBU are adequate to comply with the duty of care required by the PCBU.
- Ensure that the PCBU is performing effectively.
- Take reasonable steps to acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters.

- Gain an understanding of the hazards and risks associated with the nature of the operations.
- Ensure that the business or undertaking has appropriate resources and processes to enable hazards to be identified and risks to be eliminated or minimised.
- Ensure that the business or undertaking has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information about incidents, hazards and risks and for responding to these in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the business or undertaking implements processes for complying with its duties and obligations.

## Health and Safety Representatives

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) have a responsibility to promote the health and safety of the workers in their work group or workplace.

Health and Safety Representatives' responsibilities include:

- Inspect the workplace of members of a work group if there has been a recent accident or dangerous occurrence, or where there is an immediate threat of an accident or dangerous occurrence, after giving the PCBU reasonable notice of the inspection.
- Make a request to an inspector, or the regulator, that an investigation be conducted in the workplace.
- Accompany an inspector during an investigation.
- Represent the members of the work group in health and safety consultations with the PCBU.
- Initiate emergency stop-work procedures when necessary.
- Issue Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs).

## Others

Other persons (visitors) at the workplace have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety. They also have a duty to take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. They must also comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU to maintain the PCBU's compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)*.

## 1.5 Roles and Responsibilities for Safe Manual Handling

### NQ Excavator Hire

With respect to manual handling, NQ Excavator Hire will ensure that:

- Plant and equipment used in the workplace is designed, constructed and maintained (as far as reasonably practicable) so that they are safe and without risk to health and safety when handled manually.
- Work practices involving manual handling are designed, implemented and maintained (as far as reasonably practicable) so that they are safe and without risk to health and safety.
- The working environment is designed, constructed and maintained (as far as reasonably practicable) to be consistent with safe manual handling practices.
- The need to identify, assess and control MSD risks is addressed.
- Workers who carry out manual handling tasks have the appropriate training, education and work experience to perform tasks correctly.
- Consultation regarding manual handling has involved Health and Safety Representatives.

### Officer

The Officer has the responsibility for insuring the effective implementation of the Work Health and Safety Policy and its associated procedures, and will ensure that:

- Adequate resources are made available to implement the Work Health and Safety Policy and Manual Handling Procedure. Adequate resources include financial means, personnel and time (e.g. using an approved Code of Practice for manual handling and lifting equipment; ensuring that there is adequate staff to perform team lifting techniques; ensuring that time is made available for regular manual handling auditing; implementing a purchasing policy; conducting regular supervisory checks).
- Appropriate training is provided to enable workers to fulfil their assigned roles and responsibilities.

## Managers

Managers and supervisors will:

- Inform and explain to workers the NQ Excavator Hire Work Health and Safety Policy and Manual Handling Procedure.
- Ensure that workplace safety inspections take place regularly.
- Ensure that adequate lifting equipment is provided at all workplaces, and make sure that workers understand how to use such equipment.
- Ensure that adequate personnel are rostered on to perform the tasks required.
- Report, record and investigate all manual handling accidents/incidents.

Refer to **WHS – Workplace Safety Inspection Procedure**.

## Workers

All workers will aim to eliminate the risk of manual handling injuries by:

- participating in identifying, assessing and controlling manual handling tasks if asked by their manager or HSR
- participating in the consultative process between Health and Safety Representatives and management
- following information, training and instructions
- not performing tasks such as keying or hand stapling repetitively for more than 30 minutes at a time or for more than two hours per shift or work day
- not lifting or moving items that they find heavy or awkward (trolleys, lifting equipment or team lifting will be used instead)
- not repeatedly lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling items for more than 30 minutes at a time or for more than two hours per shift or work day
- using all provided lifting equipment at all times
- reporting damage or malfunction of lifting equipment to their supervisor or manager (an out of service tag must be placed on the item to render it not in use until it is repaired or replaced)
- storing items that are used often in the range of mid-thigh height to shoulder height (storing items outside of this range leads to risks from bending, twisting and reaching)
- reporting all strains, sprains, aches and other injuries from lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling etc. to their manager immediately after occurrence.

Refer to **WHS – Incident Reporting Procedure**.

## 1.6 What is Manual Handling?

Manual handling means using your body to exert force to handle, support or restrain any object, including people or animals.

It is not only lifting or carrying heavy objects; it includes lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, lowering, throwing, carrying, packing, typing, assembling, cleaning, sorting and using tools.

The term is not limited to handling heavy objects – pruning plants, stacking items onto a shelf and helping a patient into a bath are just some examples of manual handling.

Examples of manual handling tasks commonly performed in offices include lifting and carrying boxes of paper; moving office furniture and equipment such as computers and printers; handling large files, books and legal documents; prolonged data entry; and opening and closing filing cabinet drawers.

Hazardous manual handling involves:

- repetitive or sustained application of force
- awkward postures or movements
- tasks that people would find difficult due to the degree of force applied (high force)
- exposure to sustained vibration
- manually handling live people or animals
- manually handling awkward or unstable loads that are difficult to grasp or hold.

## Effects of Hazardous Manual Handling

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) is a collective term for a range of conditions that are characterised by discomfort or pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues, with or without visible symptoms. MSDs are usually associated with tasks involving repetitive movement, sustained or unnatural postures or forceful movements. Previously, these conditions have been referred to in various ways, such as Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) or Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI).

Some of the most common MSDs are to the back, shoulder, knee, wrist and elbow.

Muscle strains can occur suddenly, and may result from forceful exertion in a bent or twisted posture (e.g. lifting a box of paper from the floor). However, many MSDs occur due to daily routines where the worker holds a static posture, resulting in muscle fatigue (e.g. holding the telephone), and repetitive work such as keyboard and mouse tasks. Conditions that have this type of gradual onset are probably more common in office work than sudden injuries.

### Sprain and Strain Injuries

A strain is a muscular injury and a sprain is a tendon or ligament injury. Sprain and strain injuries can result in:

- localised pain
- swelling when blood vessels are torn, leading to bruising
- muscle spasms (the body's protective response to injury, acting to restrict movement and hence further injury)
- a reduced capacity to recover or repair.

Musculoskeletal injury generally starts as an acute injury. That is, injuries generally of sudden onset that usually occur from a known incident (e.g. ankle sprain, low back strain). Some acute injuries develop into chronic injury. Chronic injury develops slowly and may persist for long periods of time. The cause of chronic injury is commonly poor management of the injury in its acute stage.

Factors that may increase the risk or severity of a manual handling injury include:

- forceful exertions
- working postures
- repetition and duration
- vibration
- work area design

- hand tool use
- the nature of loads
- load handling
- individual factors.

## 1.7 Strategy

Manual handling will be a consideration in, and a specification for:

- the design and redesign of workplaces, work practices and plant and equipment
- the review of existing workplaces, work practices and plant and equipment
- the maintenance of workplaces, work practices and plant and equipment
- the purchase of all goods and services
- continuing negotiations with staff and clients to ensure a safe work environment.

NQ Excavator Hire will ensure that a risk assessment is completed for each manual handling task and piece of equipment, and that control procedures are recommended for those presenting any risk. Safe work practices based on these assessments will be reviewed annually.

Refer to **WHS – Risk Assessment (Task, Process, Situation)** and **WHS – Risk Assessment (Plant, Equipment)**.

Refer to the *National Code of Practice for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders from Performing Manual Tasks at Work (2007)*.

## 1.8 Risk Management

Once a hazard has been identified, the following steps must be followed:

1. Assess the risk; identify the probability, frequency and consequence for a potential injury to occur.
2. Control the major risks first, using the following hierarchy of control:
  - i) elimination
  - ii) substitution
  - iii) isolation/engineering
  - iv) administration
  - v) personal protective equipment.

3. Consult with peers and management to remove or minimise the risk.
4. Ensure that action is taken.
5. Check the effectiveness of the solution and ensure that no new hazards have been introduced.

## 1.9 General Procedures

Where it is not practicable to eliminate the risk, the following general procedures should apply:

- Always plan a manual lift prior to attempting the lift.
- Stagger your stance.
- Ensure that the route taken is clear of obstacles or obstructions.
- Check that the load is not too heavy to lift or carry alone. If the load is too heavy, either get assistance from a fellow worker or use a mechanical lifting device.
- If carrying a load with a fellow worker, always keep in step.
- When carrying a load with a fellow worker, always ensure that you tell each other of any action you are about to perform, such as lowering or adjusting the load.
- Keep a firm grip on the load.
- Lower the load using your body weight by putting the weight of the load on your legs and bending your knees.
- Never carry a load that blocks your vision, as you may trip or run into another object.
- Maintain the natural curve of the spine, keeping your back straight throughout the lift.

## 2.0 Procedure Implementation

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This procedure is to be implemented through the policies and arrangements established under NQ Excavator Hire's Work Health and Safety Program, which has been designed to provide the highest level of safety for the company, workers and others.

### 1.10 Procedure Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in business practice or relevant legislation.

## 1.11 Dissemination of Procedure

A copy of this procedure will be made available to each worker upon commencement of work and additional copies made available upon request.

## 1.12 Authority and Responsibility

This procedure is issued under the authority of the Manager Director of NQ Excavator Hire.

## 1.13 Enquiries and Faults

Adherence to this procedure will generally ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation. Workers requiring assistance with the interpretation of this procedure, or who wish to report a breach of this procedure, should contact an Officer or HSR of NQ Excavator Hire.

## 1.14 Related Documents

### **a) Forms**

- i) WHS – Risk Assessment (Task, Process, Situation)
- ii) WHS – Risk Assessment (Plant, Equipment)

### **b) Procedures**

- i) WHS – Workplace Safety Inspection Procedure
- ii) WHS – Incident Reporting Procedure

### **c) Supplementary Policies**

- i) WHS – Ergonomics Policy
- ii) WHS – Work Health and Safety Policy

### **d) Legislation**

- i) Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- ii) Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Commonwealth)
- iii) Health and Safety Codes of Practice 2011
- iv) National Code of Practice for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders from Performing Manual Tasks at Work (2007)

## 1.15 Procedure Version Control

Date	Author/Department	Version Number	Change Summary
12/12/13	David Vass/WHS	1.0	Original

## Signed, written acknowledgement of Manual Handling Policy:

I acknowledge the NQ Excavator Hire manual handling Policy. I have read the policy and its associated procedures in full and fully agree to abide by all its terms.

**Worker name:**

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**Worker signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_