

Manual Handling

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

The objectives of the Manual Handling policy are to:

- Maintain a safe and healthy work environment,
- Reduce the cost of manual handling injuries both to organisation and individuals,
- Address any workplace factors which may increase the risk of manual handling injuries.

This procedure is to ensure that Subee meets its legal and moral requirement to ensure that hazardous manual tasks are completed safely and without injury at all Subee activities. It will apply to all employees and volunteers and requires the **full co-operation and assistance of all employees.**

Legislation

Work Health & Safety legislation requires Subee Pty Ltd to identify and control the risks involved in any manual handling that could be seen as a hazardous manual task.

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (the WHS Act)

Scope

Subee Newlake is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for employees, volunteers, clients and visitors.

Most manual handling injuries are preventable through better approaches to managing risks. Manual handling injuries often result from:

- Moving, transporting, transferring clients
- Repetitive movements
- Lifting and carrying materials and equipment
- Working at incorrect heights
- Lack of physical space
- Heavy physical work
- Poor workplace design
- Poor postures and actions

- Sudden unexpected load bearing
- Fatigue
- Poor physical fitness
- No mechanical aids being used
- No training in manual handling techniques and the use of mechanical aids
- Unpredictable, changing, large loads

Policy Statement

Subee manual handling practices in the workplace are completed in a safe manner by:

- Consulting with employees to identify manual handling hazards and to assess and control the associated risks;
- Ensuring the design of work systems, equipment, tasks and the work environment is consistent with the goal of eliminating or reducing manual handling injuries;
- Allocating sufficient resources (in terms of people, facilities and equipment) to enable the aims of this policy to be achieved.

With these measures in place Subee Newlake provides a safe patient handling and movement approach that supports a NO Lift Policy.

Definitions

- **Manual Handling** is any activity where a person lifts, lowers, pushes, pulls, carries or otherwise moves, holds or restrains any animate or inanimate object.
- **Person Manual Handling** is any activity that involves moving something by bodily force.
- **Transfer board** – for a person who is unable to stand but has upper body strength.
- **Turntable** – to assist a person to rotate their position or allow them to be rotated without twisting.
- **Wheelchair** – designed so the carer can move the person or so the person can move themselves.
- **Slide sheet** – used when the person is unable to provide any assistance with the roll/move.

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- **Stand up lifter** – used for those who are weight bearing but may be unsteady on their feet once standing.
- **Hoist** e.g. wall mounted, over-bed, ceiling – used to move a person from a bed to chair when they are unable to assist with the lift.
- **Bariatric** – equipment designed for a person who meets two or more of the three criteria points:
 - weighing more than 120 kg
 - having a body mass index greater than 35
 - possessing a hip width when seated of or greater than 51cm or more
- **A musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)**, as defined in the WHS Regulation, means an injury to, or a disease of, the musculoskeletal system, whether occurring suddenly or over time. It does not include an injury caused by crushing, entrapment (such as fractures and dislocations) or cutting resulting from the mechanical operation of plant.
- **Safe Patient Handling formerly known as 'No Lift Policy'** calls for staff to avoid manual handling with virtually all client. This is facilitated by Safe Patient Handling outlined in the Manual Handling Policy and annual Manual Handling Training.
- **Falls from a height** can be from ladders, down stairs, due to insecurely guarded drops/ledges or from standing on chairs to reach an object.

Procedure

Identifying manual handling risks

Manual handling hazards should be identified as part of the risk assessments when:

- Developing/ reviewing Safe Work Practices:
- Subee Respite houses site inspections
- Client home and other community site inspections
- Client risk assessments and

- Prior to commencing/using new venues, equipment or practices

Consultation between management, workers, clients and, if appropriate, their families/carers is an important part of the hazard identification process. Coordinators, Managers and Nurses are to encourage everyone to help identify risks.

Assessing manual handling risks

In accordance with Subee Risk Management Policy, the risk level of identified hazards is assessed for likelihood and consequence.

When assessing manual handling risks Coordinators, Managers and Nurses will consider:

- Actions and movements involved
- The work environment, including temperature and layout
- The worker's posture and position
- The duration and frequency of manual handling
- The load location and distance moved
- Weights and forces involved
- The characteristics of loads and equipment
- How the task relates to work being carried out before and after
- The work's age, skill and experience
- The clothing required; and
- Any special needs of the worker

Assessing falls from height risk

Falls from a height can be from ladders, down stairs, due to insecurely guarded drops/ledges or from standing on chairs to reach an object.

The causes of such incidents can range from incorrect footwear, inattention, poor lighting or unpredictable work environment.

Subee Newlake does not allow its staff to work from heights. Where staff members are requested to complete a task that requires working from a ladder or height approval must be sought from management and an effective risk control measure ie step ladder used to minimise any risk of falls.

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Staff will decline completion of the task until such measures are in place

It may be considered In certain cases, small step ladders with three steps or less in good condition, approved for the weight of the individual may be used as a means of cleaning below normal ceiling height eg lights, splash marks or mould on walls, ceiling fan blades. **Staff may not go above the first step**

Employees must not use ladders, stand on chairs or take any risks associated with heights what-so-ever, even small ones.

Eliminate or control the risks

The relevant work supervisor is responsible for consulting and developing a response to the manual handling risk assessment.

Senior RN and Managers are responsible for eliminating or controlling manual handling risks at Subee sites and organisation-wide manual handling risks.

Eliminating the risk is the most effective way to make work safe but if this is not possible, procedures must be developed to control the risk. Generally, Safe Work Practices are the means of controlling manual handling risks.

The principles of safe patient handling are equally applicable to the care of clients with bariatric needs. The assessment of the provision of equipment for clients with bariatric needs must include safe workload for the patient weight, size and body shape requirements.

There is no longer a prescribed weight limit for men and women where it is illegal to lift. Instead the risk of lifting the load should be assessed. Manual handling injuries may be eliminated or minimized by:

- Eliminate the task (for example, use of a wheelchair taxi rather than transporting the client and their wheelchair in the carer's car).

- Eliminate the risk of injury task using (by the use of) engineering controls (for example, changing the equipment or materials used)
- Reduce the amount of handling involved (for example, change work practices).
- Reduce repetitive work by introducing variations in work activities.
- Alter the layout of work areas to avoid twisting, sideways bending or excessive reaching.
- Match skills and abilities of workers with client needs.
- Reorganise storage areas so that heavier and frequently used items are stored between knee and shoulder height and ensure weight of products is manageable.
- Staff ratios and skill mix must be adequate to reflect the dependency levels and handling needs of patients and to ensure the safe use of aids and equipment.
- Carry smaller loads
- Use of lifting devices.
- Maintain and regularly inspect all equipment and regularly inspect all equipment used for manual handling tasks.
- If client condition changes, review manual handling procedure.
- Provide information and training on risk assessment and safe lifting techniques at induction and during in-service training programs.
- Providing staff with access to facilities and encouragement to exercise.
- Ensure correct manual handling techniques are utilized. At all times consider and apply the appropriate manual handling techniques of:
 - stance (both feet slightly apart and level),
 - posture (straight back),
 - leverage (use legs and shoulders to push not the back),
 - adaptation (allow for movement)
 - and avoid twisting.

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Training & Support

Manual handling will be incorporated in the mandatory training program for all staff.

Manual Handling will be included in the Orientation for new staff.

Practical manual handling training will be provided annually by Subee RN that addresses the specific tasks staff encounter in their work.

The Altura LMS module will complement training and staff can be redirected to the online learning module if required.

The RN may need to conduct specific manual handling training for client's transfer needs in the client's home with the support workers.

Effective on-the-job safe work practices instruction and adequate supervision will help staff be aware of manual handling issues and the ways they can perform their jobs consistently and safely.

Review

Compliance

Compliance with this policy is being measured by:

- 100% of staff have completed hazardous manual tasks training and
- Records show staff have been assessed as competent in safe work practices relevant to their work.

Evaluation

The performance indicators for the evaluation of this policy are:

- 0% of incidents resulting from hazardous manual tasks;

Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring and review is an integral part of risk management. The relevant Coordinators, Managers and Nurses are responsible for monitoring that the safe work practices/equipment/procedure is being implemented as designed. If they identify any difficulty with the control, they must refine it to a more suitable strategy.

A review of a manual handling SWP/control/procedure will be conducted if a Corrective Action Report highlights it as possibly inaccurate or ineffective.

It is important to continue to consult with everybody involved.

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- At least 90% of Subee staff giving a positive rating on how well Subee is committed to safety; and
- At least 90% give a positive rating in their evaluation of hazardous manual tasks training

Resources

Safe Work Australia – Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/manual-handling>

Safe Work NSW – Manual Handling
<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/manual-tasks>

Australian Nurses and Midwives Federation (ANMF)
https://www.anmf.org.au/documents/policies/P_Safe_Patient_Handling.pdf

Altura eLearning module: Manual Handling: Use of equipment to assist clients

Australasian Bariatric Innovations Group
<http://www.ausbig.com.au/resources/bariatric-articles-and-information/aged-care>

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