



Manual Task Risk Assessment Guidelines

PURPOSE

It is a legal requirement under the Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health regulations 1996 that employers identify hazards, assess the risk and consider means by which to reduce the risk. This is further specified in relation to manual tasks in the workplace. This guideline seeks to give information as to how to complete a manual task risk assessment.

1. Hazardous Manual Tasks

Hazardous manual tasks mean there is a greater risk of harm involved in the task.

These include:

- (a) manual tasks having any of the following characteristics:
 - i. forces exerted by the worker (eg lifting, lowering or carrying) or on the worker by an item, person or animal (eg restraining a dog);
 - ii. awkward postures (eg bending forwards, twisting or reaching);
 - iii. sustained postures (eg prolonged sitting or standing);
 - iv. repetitive movements (eg repeating an action frequently, without breaks);
 - v. vibration – whole-body (eg sitting in certain vehicles) and hand-arm (eg using certain powered tools);
- (b) manual tasks involving the handling of a person or an animal; or
- (c) manual tasks involving the handling of unstable or unbalanced loads or loads difficult to grasp or hold.

The manual task risk assessment aims to determine the risk to the person conducting the task, and to give some guidance as to control measures required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Manual task risk assessments should be conducted firstly for all hazardous manual tasks, and any other manual tasks where there is a perceived risk of injury.

2. Conducting the Risk Assessment

Manual task risk assessments should be conducted at the site where the task is undertaken to gain an understanding of the work environment. A team of people should conduct the risk assessment including the Safety and Health Representative for the area, staff using the equipment and their line manager. Expertise may be sought from the Injury Management team, Health and Safety Advisors or external parties.

Where required, permission should be sought from the area supervisor to conduct the risk assessment. An area induction may be required and/or direct supervision whilst in the work area.

It is useful to conduct the risk assessment at varying times to take into consideration the normal working conditions and at other times such when there may be increased workload or demand. After hours use, use by differing personnel and changes within the work routine should be also be taken into account.

A person familiar with the task and work area should advise risk assessment participants of any potential hazards.



2.1. Information sources for hazard identification

Gather information to help you identify hazards:

- 2.1.1. Safe work procedures and other risk assessments eg. plant
- 2.1.2. Plant and equipment operator manuals
- 2.1.3. Rosters and position descriptions
- 2.1.4. Any injury, incident or hazard reports related to the task or area
- 2.1.5. Legislative information eg. Regulations, Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes
- 2.1.6. Relevant Australian Standards

The risk assessment team should familiarise themselves with the above information prior to the assessment to ensure all aspects are considered.

2.2 Gather Equipment

Gather equipment to complete the assessment.

- 2.2.1 Personal protective equipment eg. Safety shoes, gloves, hearing protection, eye protection, respiratory protection
- 2.2.2 Camera (pictures for future reference or including in procedures)
- 2.2.3 Manual Task Risk Assessment form, clipboard & pens

2.3. Conduct the Risk Assessment

- 2.3.1 Follow safety procedures including isolation procedures and signage in the workplace
- 2.3.2 Avoid unnecessarily interrupting people's work
- 2.3.3 If you are unsure of any issues around the task, make a note and check on it at a later time
- 2.3.4 Do not enter any restricted areas.
- 2.3.5 Take photos, with the person's permission, of body postures during the task for future reference.
- 2.3.6 If you identify unsafe situations, advise personnel immediately.
- 2.3.7 Complete the risk assessment using the Manual Task Risk Assessment form.

2.4 After the Risk Assessment

- 2.4.1 Follow-up on any further information required.
- 2.4.2 Where hazards have been identified enter them into the Health & Safety online reporting system.



- 2.4.3 Where action items have arisen ensure they are entered into the online reporting system or corrective actions register where in use .
- 2.4.4 If new controls are implemented review them after a period of time for effectiveness.
- 2.4.5 Develop safe work procedures based on the risk assessment. Include key points in workplace inspection checklists to enable monitoring of controls.
- 2.4.6 If you have residual risk ratings of medium, high or extreme further review of the task is needed. There may be a need for more detailed assessment e.g. ergonomic, noise, vibration or thermal stress assessment. Contact your area's Health and Safety Advisor and/or the Senior Ergonomics Advisor.
- 2.4.7 Add the task to the Manual Task Register or Risk Register for the area.
- 2.4.8 The assessment should be reviewed if the task, equipment or environment changes or as part of the regular annual overall risk review.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Line Managers and Supervisors

Line Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- (a) Participating in or directly supervising the undertaking of the manual task risk assessment;
- (b) Ensuring manual task risk assessments are conducted using the manual task risk assessment form, and;
- (c) Ensuring appropriate risk control measures are applied as per the hierarchy of control.
- (d) Referring medium, high or extreme risk rated tasks to the Health and Safety and/or Ergonomics/Injury Management team.

3.2 Individual Workers

Individual Workers including Safety and Health Representatives are responsible for :

- a) Assisting with the preparation of risk assessments.
- b) Complying with control measures.

4. Definitions

Risk Assessment: overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

Risk Rating: is defined as low, medium, high or extreme based on the University Health and Safety Risk Matrix prior to any corrective actions or controls being implemented.



Residual Risk Rating: Residual risk is defined as low, medium, high or extreme based on the University Health and Safety Risk Matrix after recommended corrective actions or controls have been implemented.

5. EXEMPTIONS

These procedures apply to all areas of the University where manual tasks are conducted.

6. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/LINKS

[Manual Task Risk Assessment form](#)
[Health and Safety Risk Matrix](#)
[WorkSafe WA \(2011\) Code of Practice: Manual Tasks](#)
[Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1995](#)

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact	Senior Ergonomics Advisor Ph: (08) 9266 9206 ergonomics@curtin.edu.au
Approval Authority	Manager, Injury Management & Disability

REVISION HISTORY

Revision #	Date	Amendment Description
1.0	21/11/2013	Issued for use