

# Food Businesses 1: Manual Handling

## Loads

Are they:

- heavy, bulky or unwieldy?
- difficult to grasp?
- unstable, sharp or hot?

## Working environment

Are there:

- lifting tasks in confined spaces, on slippery floors or in poorly lit areas?
- variations in floor levels or work surfaces?
- extremes of temperature or humidity?

## Individual capability

Does the job:

- require unusual strength or height?
- create a risk for those who are pregnant or have an existing health problem?
- need special information or training to do it safely?

## Other factors

Does clothing:

- hinder movement or restrict posture?

The more factors identified, the higher the risk will be. **If more than one factor is identified in a particular task, the risk of injury may be significant.** After completing the assessment you should take steps to control or eliminate any risks.

## Practical measures to control risks

Almost all manual handling injuries are preventable, usually with minimum cost.

Such action is often simply a case of changing the way a job is performed, such as resiting

equipment or adapting working heights. The action required will depend on your findings in the risk assessment but is likely to involve one or more of the following:



## Can you avoid manual handling tasks?

This should be your first priority. Examples of avoiding handling include:

- reorganising the layout of the kitchen/workroom to reduce the amount of lifting or carrying;
- fitting a length of hosepipe to a tap so that buckets can be filled at a convenient height (ensure pipe cannot touch the floor);
- using automated dosing equipment to reduce drum handling.

## Can you use mechanical aids to make the task easier?

Such aids include:

- two-wheeled sack trucks;
- four-wheeled trolleys (with lockable castors if needed);
- hoists;
- false bottoms for deep sinks.

## Can you redesign individual tasks?:

You should try to:

- reduce the amount of twisting, bending, stooping, stretching, pushing and pulling;
- store heavy items on shelves at waist height;

- use trolleys to move loads around;
- use team working for tasks such as moving furniture'

## Can you make loads easier to handle?

For example:

- buying cooking oil in easier to handle cardboard boxes with sturdy handles/grips;
- breaking down trays of large cans before loading onto storage shelving;
- using concentrates of cleaning chemicals where appropriate;
- putting heavy equipment such as chest freezers on castors (lockable) to make cleaning routines easier;
- using lighter loads, eg 25kg rather than 50kg sacks.

## What can you do to improve the workplace conditions?

For example:

- replace or repair uneven or slippery floors;
- provide trolley ramps at changes in floor level.

## Information, instruction and training

It is difficult to get rid of all manual handling tasks. If there is still a risk, remember that providing information and training – for example, training employees in safe lifting techniques – are legal requirements.

The above guidance was produced by the Health and Safety Executive. For further information visit the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) and look up 'musculoskeletal disorders' or email [worksafe@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:worksafe@babergh.gov.uk).