



STANDARD – HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASKS

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1 GENERAL

1.1 Purpose

Hunter Water is committed to reducing the incidence and severity of musculoskeletal disorders that may arise from manual tasks in the workplace. This document sets out the standard to be followed to reduce the risk of injury from manual task activities at Hunter Water.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this standard for Hazardous Manual Tasks is to provide practical guidelines in meeting the requirements of the *Code of Practice for Hazardous Manual Tasks* for the identification, assessment and control of risks arising from hazardous manual tasks in Hunter Water workplaces.

1.3 Scope

The requirements of this Standard cover all personnel engaged in design, purchasing, maintenance and operational activities on Hunter Water sites where hazardous manual task risk management may be necessary.

1.4 Definitions

Consultation	<p>Workers are entitled to take part in consultations and to be represented by a health and safety representative who has been elected to represent their work group.</p> <p>Consultation involves sharing of information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and contribute to the decision-making process, taking those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters, and advising workers of the outcome.</p>
Manual Task	Is any activity requiring to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing
Hazardous Manual Task	<p>Means a manual task having one or more of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repetitive or sustained force• Sustained or awkward posture• Repetitive movement• High or sudden force• Exposure to vibration <p>These hazards directly stress the body and can lead to injury</p>
MSD	<p>Means “Musculoskeletal Disorder”. This is any injury to, or a disease of, the musculoskeletal system. They may occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suddenly, with damage caused by strenuous or unexpected movements; or• Gradually with wear and tear to joints, ligaments, muscles and intervertebral discs caused by repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions <p>Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSDs) may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons• Back or neck injuries, including damage to spinal discs, joints and nerves• Joint and bone injuries or degeneration• Nerve injuries or compression (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome)• Damage to nerves and/or blood vessels as a result of hand-arm vibration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hernia's
WHSMS	Means the Hunter Water Work Health and Safety Management System.
TBRA	Task Based Risk Assessment
Hierarchy of Controls	<p>The Hierarchy of Controls sets out at preferred order in which hazards should be controlled.</p> <p>Hierarchy of Controls can be used for selecting actions to address the risk as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination – change the work practice in such a way that the hazardous manual task is no longer required • Substitution – change the work practices so the task becomes less hazardous – for example by making changes to the posture using a lighter weight tool etc. • Isolation – isolate workers from the risk, e.g. isolate the worker from vibration • Engineering – lifting aids such as mechanical lifting devices and height adjustable benches to reduce unnecessary bending • Administrative – minimise the risk by administrative means e.g. job rotation, set up group lifting procedures and safe lifting techniques training • PPE – Personal Protective Equipment should always be the last resort e.g. vibration damping gloves, heat resistant gloves for handling hot items

2 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Group Managers

Are responsible to ensure that relevant staff are provided with the necessary skills, resources and knowledge they need to manage risks to health and safety relating to musculoskeletal disorders associated with hazardous manual tasks.

2.2 Asset Managers/Asset Management Engineers

Are responsible for ensuring that plant and equipment used at the Hunter Water sites are designed, constructed and maintained in a manner that eliminates or minimises as far as reasonably practicable the need for hazardous tasks to be carried out in connection with the plant or structure. Information shall also be provided to relevant people involved with the plant regarding the features which eliminate or minimise the need for any hazardous manual task associated with it.

2.3 Managers and Team Leaders

Are responsible for complying with the requirements of Hunter Water's WHS Management System requirements and consulting with employees in the process of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control.

Managers and Team Leaders shall ensure that work practices involving hazardous manual tasks are designed without risk to health and safety by:

- Identifying hazardous manual tasks that are undertaken or are to be undertaken by staff
- Assessing the risk of hazards identified, and record the assessment
- Control the risks of hazardous manual tasks using the hierarchy of controls
- Provide training, information and instruction to staff as necessary
- Consulting with staff throughout the process

2.4 Workers

Are responsible for complying with the requirements of Hunter Water's WHS Management System, participating in the manual task Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process and working in a manner consistent with safe manual tasks work methods and/or standards.

2.5 WHS Advisors

Are available for consultation on all manual task issues and are responsible for developing, monitoring and evaluating specific Hazardous Manual Task programs.

2.6 WHS Committee

Are responsible for monitoring the activities of specific Manual Task programs or reviews and making recommendations for improving manual task management.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 Strategy for Management of Hazardous Manual Tasks

To ensure compliance with Statutory WHS requirements, Hunter Water shall adopt a Risk Management approach to dealing with hazards associated with manual tasks. This will be achieved by having in place a system of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control steps for manual tasks. Staff performing these work tasks will be involved in all steps of the process.

3.1.1 Step One – Hazard Identification

Hazards associated with manual tasks are to be identified via statistical review of incidents and hazard reports, workplace audits, observation of work tasks and how they are performed, work design and management, the tools, equipment and objects handled, or physical work environment and consultation with workers and other relevant interested parties.

3.1.2 Step Two – Risk Assessment

Identified hazardous manual tasks will then be prioritised according to the potential severity of injury, frequency of task and probability of injury whilst performing the task.

A manual task risk assessment will be performed for any manual task identified as being hazardous, unless the risk is well-known and appropriate control measures are obvious. Occurrence of an injury associated with a manual task may also act as a trigger for performance or review of a manual task risk assessment. The risk assessment process must include consultation with workers involved in performance of the manual task and a relevant WHS Committee member. In more complex situations, expert advice may also be sought (e.g. Engineering or Ergonomic input).

When determining the appropriate control measures to implement all relevant matters may be contributed will be considered with particular consideration being given to:

- Postures, movements, forces and vibration relating to the hazardous manual task
- The duration and frequency of the hazardous manual task
- Workplace environment conditions that may affect the hazardous manual task or the worker performing it
- The design of the work area
- The layout of the workplace
- The systems of work used
- The nature, size, weight or number of things handled

Hazardous manual tasks are also to be considered in the performance of task based risk assessments.

3.1.3 Step Three – Risk Control

It is the responsibility of all staff involved in the Risk Management process associated with hazardous manual tasks to ensure that control measures are put in place in accordance with the Hierarchy of Controls.

Know which risk factors are present, where they are present and why they are present (sources of the risk), know what must be controlled and work out how to do it.

When controlling risks associated with hazardous manual tasks, the following control measure should be considered:

- Changing the design or layout of work areas (e.g. workstations, working heights, working position, work space)
- Changing the nature, size, weight or number of items handled (e.g. lighter loads, choosing tools with appropriate handles and low vibration levels)
- Using mechanical aids (e.g. trolleys, cranes, turntables. Etc.)
- Changing the system of work (e.g. reducing workload or pace of work, providing additional workers for assistance with a task, using rest breaks, task rotation and team handling)

- Changing the work environment (e.g. reducing vibration transmission, improving thermal comfort, improving lighting)
- Using administrative controls(e.g. information, training and instruction)

In some instances it may be necessary to implement a combination of multiple control measures in order to effectively reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable.

3.1.4 Step Four – Evaluation and Review

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures implemented to ensure that they are effective and that they do not lead to the introduction of additional hazards within the workplace. An evaluation of control measures must include the staff in the area involved in performance of the hazardous manual task and the relevant Team Leader.

Risk control measures must be reviewed and revised (as necessary):

- When the control measure does not minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable
- Before a change that is likely to create a new or different risk that existing control measures may not effectively control
- If a new hazard or risk is identified
- If the results of consultation indicate that a review is required
- If a health and safety representative requests a review

3.2 Prioritisation of Control Implementation

Prioritisation of the implementation of controls for manual tasks should take into consideration the nature and risk level of the hazard as well as the practicability of the proposed controls.

Where practicable control options are available immediately, they should be implemented straight away, and should not be deferred until higher risk activities have been controlled. Implement control options as soon as possible. Do not wait to implement all control measures together if some can be implemented straight away.

For further information relating to application of the risk management process to hazardous manual tasks refer to the following:

- Hunter Water Manual Tasks Risk Assessment Template
- Hunter Water Ergonomic Checklist
- Standard - Risk Management
- WHS Procedure Requirements for Purchasing Goods and Services
- [NSW Code of Practice – Hazardous Manual Tasks](#)
- [Safe Work Australia Information Sheet – Hand-Arm Vibration](#)
- [Safe Work Australia Information Sheet – Whole Body Vibration](#)

4 TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Manual tasks training shall be provided to staff in accordance with requirements of the Competency and Training Requirements Standard.

Generally, the level of information, instruction or training that is required depends on the nature of the manual task, how the task should be performed and if it involves the use of any aids. This information should cover:

- Manual task risk management, including the characteristics of hazardous manual tasks and need controls for measures
- The equipment and systems in use in the workplace that the person may use for manual tasks
- The nature of the hazards and risks associated with any manual task and the measures in place to control them
- How to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures

- How to report a problem with a manual task, a control measure or other issue

5 REVIEW AND RECORDS

In order to ensure that this standard continues to be effective and applicable to the Hunter water and Legislative requirements, specific Manual Task Risk Management program reviews will be conducted annually by the WHS Committees and the Manual Task Sub-Committee.

Conditions which might warrant a review of Manual Task Management programs on a more frequent basis include:

- An injury or near miss resulting from performance of a manual task
- Changes to legislation
- Worker concern raised through the WHS Committee
- Where there are changes to normal work practices, systems and/or processes

Following completion of any review, the program will be revised and updated in order to correct any deficiencies. Any changes to the program will be consulted through the WHS Committee.

Changes to any existing Manual Task Risk Controls in Hunter Water's Risk Assessment tools shall be arranged through the appropriate staff to ensure that Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments are maintained consistent with the changes.

6 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to WHS Legislative Compliance Standard and Hunter Water WHS Legislative Compliance Register. Associated links to relevant legislative requirements are also found on Reservoir Intranet.

7 DOCUMENT CONTROL

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