



STANDARD **HAZARDOUS MANUAL** **TASKS**

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1 Purpose

This document describes the standards and procedures within Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) to effectively manage risks associated with hazardous manual tasks. It represents the HWC Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Management System's commitment to compliance with the NSW WHS Act and WHS Regulation.

2 Objectives

The objectives of this standard are to ensure that all areas, functions, and work processes that may have a Hazardous Manual task risk are effectively managed to ensure the health and safety of Hunter Water people, contractors, and the general public.

3 Scope

The Standard applies to all Hunter Water Business Units. This standard covers the requirements associated with Hazardous Manual Tasks within HWC.

4 Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Consultation	<p>Workers are entitled to participate in consultations and be represented by a health and safety representative elected to represent their work group.</p> <p>Consultation involves sharing information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and contribute to the decision-making process, considering those views 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>This 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>This means 'Musculoskeletal Disorder'. This is an 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



Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nerve injuries or compression (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome) ▪ Damage to nerves and blood vessels as a result of hand-arm vibration ▪ Hemia'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 the 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. <p>PPE – Personal Protective Equipment should always be the last resort, e.g. vibration damping gloves, heat resistant gloves for handling hot items</p>

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities can be located in the [WHSMA Manual](#).

Individual guidance booklets are in the Responsibility, Accountability, and Authority Manual [HW2021-534](#).

6 Key Elements – Managing the Risks Associated with Hazardous Manual Tasks

6.1 Strategy for Management of Hazardous Manual Tasks

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

6.1.1 Step 1 - 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.



6.1.2 Step 2 - Risk Assessment

Identified hazardous manual tasks will then be prioritised according to the potential severity of injury, task frequency, and probability of injury while 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 apparent. The occurrence of an injury associated with a manual task may also trigger the performance or review of a manual task risk assessment. The risk assessment process must include consultation with workers performing the manual task and a relevant WHS Committee member. 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 vibrations 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.

6.1.3 Step 3 - 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 by 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 measures should be considered:

- Changing the design or layout of work areas (e.g., workstations, working heights, working positions, workspace)
- 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 multiple control measures to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable effectively.

6.1.4 Step 4 - Evaluation and Review

It is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures implemented to ensure that they are effective and do not lead to additional hazards within the workplace. Control measures must be assessed by the staff performing 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 minimize 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 the consultation indicate that a review is required
- If a health and safety representative request a review

6.2 Prioritisation of Control Implementation

Prioritisation of the implementation of controls for manual tasks should consider the nature and risk level of the hazard and 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 immediately.

7 Training

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

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

- Manual task risk management, including the characteristics of hazardous manual tasks and the need for 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

Employees should undergo a competency-based assessment every two (2) years.

8 Monitoring and Review

8.1 Monitoring processes for this topic

- High Risk Audits
- Critical Element Focussed Observations
- Safe Behaviour Observations
- Field Interactions

8.2 Review processes for this topic

To ensure that this standard continues to be practical and applicable to the Hunter water and Legislative requirements, the WHS Committees and the Manual Task Sub-Committee will conduct specific Manual Task Risk Management program reviews annually.

- Review of applicable injury and incident reports

- Review of hazard reports in Protect
- Review of this standard and associated documents, Risk Register, Bow Tie diagrams following a potential incident

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

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

After any review, the program will be revised and updated 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 consistent with the changes.

9 Related Documents

Document ID	Document Title
Assessment	Pre-Task Risk Assessment PTR
Standard	Consultation, Cooperation, Participation and Coordination
Template	Hunter Water Manual Tasks Risk Assessment
Assessment	Hunter Water Workstation Ergonomic
Standard	Risk Management

10 Associated Regulations and Standards

Document ID	Document Title
Act	NSW WHS Act 2011
Regulation	WHS Regulation 2017
Code of Practice	Code of Practice – Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation, Participation and Coordination
Code of Practice	Code of Practice - How to manage work health and safety risks
NSW Code of Practice	NSW Code of Practice – Hazardous Manual Tasks
Information Sheet	Safe Work Australia Information Sheet – Hand-Arm Vibration
Information Sheet	Safe Work Australia Information Sheet – Whole Body Vibration

