

Manual Handling Black Spots: Health and Community Services



MANUAL HANDLING SOLUTIONS

Problem	Solution
Client handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk belts.• Slings.• Slide sheet or board.• Handrails and hold bars.• Stand aid hoist.• Stair lift.• Stair climbing wheelchair.• Powered adjustable height bed.• Motorised bed moving trolleys.
Move and carry bags, sacks and cartons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forklift.• Pallet jack.• Rotary table.• Walking frame or trolley.
Store and select materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pallet jack.• Shelf trolley.• Conveyor with turntable.• Gravity fed racking.• Adjustable height turntables.
Manage waste (and general cleaning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Powered tug.• Cylinder trolley.• Spring-loaded laundry trolley.• Mobile belt conveyor.• Shelf trolley.• Mop bucket on wheels.

WHAT IS MANUAL HANDLING?

Manual handling is any activity that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining. It may also include stretching and bending, sustained and awkward postures, and repetitive movements. Manual handling can result in musculoskeletal injuries to workers.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Every year, in NSW health and community services more than 2500 people are seriously injured or suffer from illness related to manual handling. This represents about 47 per cent of all injuries for health and community services.

This costs NSW health and community services about \$42 million a year.

Generally, manual handling in health and community services affects the back, shoulder, knees and wrists.

The most common manual handling injuries include sprains and strains, and damage to muscles, tendons and soft tissues.



BLACK SPOTS

Black spots are activities that cause the majority of manual handling injuries. Manual handling injuries in health and community services are often caused when lifting or carrying patients and children, cartons and beds. Occupations that are black spots for manual handling injuries include nurses, cleaners, carers and aides.

Sectors within the health and community services industry that are prone to manual handling injuries include hospitals, nursing homes, community health centres, ambulance and childcare services.

MANAGING MANUAL HANDLING RISKS

Risk management is a step by step process to help employers make decisions about eliminating or controlling risks. See WorkCover's *Manual handling risk guide* for more information on risk management.

Things to consider include:

- designing the workplace and work practices to prevent people being exposed to manual handling risks, with particular attention to equipment design, access and space
- consulting with those workers who perform manual handling tasks and identifying possible problems (eg making beds)
- assessing the risks (eg how likely is a manual handling injury when making beds?)
- eliminating or controlling the problem (eg raise the height of the beds to avoid stooping, improve access with movable cabinets, use additional staff)
- providing mechanical assistance or lifting aids
- training and supervising workers in safe work practices
- monitoring and reviewing any changes.

INCENTIVES

Some of the immediate benefits of preventing manual handling injuries include:

- decreased workplace injuries
- reduced insurance premiums due to fewer injuries
- lower litigation costs
- increased productivity rates.

Some of the indirect benefits of preventing manual handling injuries include:

- less absenteeism
- decreased staff turnover
- improved corporate image
- more job satisfaction, better morale.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- WorkCover Assistance Service **13 10 50**
- **www.workcover.nsw.gov.au**
- *Manual handling risk guide (2007)* WorkCover NSW
- *Risk management at work: safety guide (2001)* WorkCover NSW
- *Workplace safety kit (2001)* WorkCover NSW
- Employer organisations
- Unions
- National Standard and Code of Practice – **www.ascc.gov.au**

DISCLAIMER

This publication contains information regarding occupational health, safety, injury management or workers compensation. It includes some of your obligations under the various workers compensation and occupational health and safety legislation that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate Acts. This publication may refer to WorkCover NSW administered legislation that has been amended or repealed. When reading this publication you should always refer to the latest laws. Information on the latest laws can be checked at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au or contact (02) 9238 0950 or 1800 463 955 (NSW country only).

Catalogue No. 1435 08/07



WorkCover NSW
92-100 Donnison St Gosford NSW 2250
Locked Bag 2906 Lisarow NSW 2252
WorkCover Assistance Service 13 10 50
Website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
V2.00 © WorkCover NSW 0807



New South Wales Government