



# LEIA Safety Information Sheet

## MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS

*Prepared by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee*



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## PREAMBLE

This Information Sheet is one of a series produced by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee on topics relevant to the Lift and Escalator Industry. Whilst every effort has been taken in the production of these sheets, it must be acknowledged that they should be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation, codes of practice etc. They should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law but guidance to it.

## THE MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS REGULATIONS 1992

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended 2004) were introduced on 1 January 1993.

The Regulations apply to all industries and services and cover all hazardous manual handling operations. They replace earlier legislation which applied only to certain sectors and which has proved somewhat ineffective in reducing the number of associated injuries – with handling/lifting/carrying now amounting to 21% of all accidents reported under RIDDOR in 2018 (HSE document - Summary Statistics for Great Britain 2018)

Manual handling should not just be considered as lifting pushing, pulling, carrying etc but also includes cuts etc from handling materials. There are also the cumulative effects of manual handling which can cause long term physical injury or even permanent disablement.

In considering the need to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling, the employer (and the self employed) should first consider a hierarchy of measures: -

- a) AVOID the need for hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable; if not possible
- b) ASSESS the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; and
- c) REDUCE the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling so far as is reasonably practicable.

## THE REGULATIONS

Manual handling operations are interpreted as the transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force.

Workers should not be exposed to risks of injury by manual handling; where manual handling cannot be avoided; the employer must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the task and take appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury.

In deciding whether an assessment needs to be carried out, reference should be made to the assessment checklist provided in the HSE document L23 Guidance on Regulations - Manual Handling Operations Regulations Appendix A, Section A - Preliminary. These guidelines need to be read carefully and understood before any action is undertaken.

## ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

The factors to be included in the assessment are contained in Schedule 1 of the Regulations, and are under the following headings: -

- 1) The Task(s)
- 2) The Load(s)
- 3) The Working Environment
- 4) Individual Capability
- 5) Other Factors

The assessment shall be reviewed when there is reason to believe it is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the manual handling operations to which the assessment relates; and the employer shall update the assessment accordingly.

Each assessment must address the following questions as they all increase the risk of injury: -

### 1) The Task

Does it involve: -

- holding loads away from the trunk?
- twisting?
- stooping?
- reaching upwards?
- large vertical movement?
- carrying a load long distances?
- strenuous pushing or pulling of the load?
- unpredictable movement of loads?
- repetitive handling?
- insufficient rest or recovery?
- a work rate imposed by a process?

### 2) The Loads

Are they: -

- heavy?
- bulky/ unwieldy?
- difficult to grasp?
- unstable/unpredictable?
- intrinsically harmful (eg sharp/hot)?

### 3) The Working Environment

Are there: -

- constraints on posture?
- slippery or unstable floors?
- poor floors?
- variations in levels?
- hot/cold/humid/windy conditions?

- poor lighting conditions?

#### 4) Individual Capability

Does the job: -

- require unusual capability? Strength or height
- create a hazard to those with a health problem or a physical or learning difficulty?
- create a hazard to those who are pregnant?
- call for special information/training?
- cause movement or posture to be hindered by clothing or personal protective equipment?

#### 5) Other Factors

The assessment should be recorded and kept readily accessible as long as it remains relevant. However, if the assessment is: -

- easily repeated;
- simple; and
- obvious;

Or if the task is straight forward,

- of no risk,
  - of short duration and
  - the time taken to record it is disproportionate,
- then the assessment need not be recorded.

Staff must be consulted, and it is recommended that they are involved in the assessment, as they will know first-hand the manual handling issues that affect them and may have practical input into solutions to help reduce the risks.

Examples of an assessment check list is printed in Appendix A to the Guidance to the Regulations.

### SAFETY POLICY

Where manual handling is carried out on a significant scale, employers of five or more persons should incorporate the manual handling arrangements into, or in association with, their health and safety policy.

### EMPLOYEES

Employees have duties under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their activities. Under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations, they have a duty to make full and proper use of any systems of work or equipment provided for their use by their employer. Regulation 5 of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations supplements these general duties in the case of manual handling by requiring employees to follow appropriate systems of work laid down by their employer to promote safety during the handling of loads.

### TRAINING

Although employers have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act to train employees, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations do not specify any training requirements, leaving it to the employers to determine the safest means of executing manual handling operations through the

medium of the assessment. This may well indicate the need to select personnel with the appropriate capabilities; to give specialised training and to implement procedures for identifying ill health caused by manual handling operations.

### FURTHER GUIDANCE

Further guidance and advice on manual handling

Getting to grips with Manual Handling INDG143 A short guide which offers best practice on considerations, techniques and control measures. (ISBN 0 7176 2828 0)

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) Guidance on Regulations L23 (ISBN 0 7176 2823 X)

Manual Handling Assessment Charts INDG383

These publications can be obtained from HSE Books. Tel: 01787 881165 or free online:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

LEIA Lift & Escalator Site Safety Handbook

For any clarification of this Information Sheet contact your company Safety Advisor or the LEIA Training and Safety Manager.