

Manual Handling Procedure

It is not possible to eliminate manual handling altogether, following correct handling techniques will minimise the risks of injury. There are a variety of injuries that may occur as a result of poor manual handling. Staff must be aware and adhere to Oakbridge Little Learners manual handling policy.

Preventing Injuries

The most effective method of prevention is to eliminate the hazard or remove the need to carry out the dangerous manual handling. It may be necessary to re-evaluate the work area and re design it so that items do not need to be carried around.

Where manual handling tasks cannot be avoided, they must be assessed as part of the risk assessment. This involves examining the tasks and deciding what the risks associated with them are, and how these can be removed or reduced by adding control measures.

Things to consider when thinking about manual handling.

- *The tasks to be carried out
- *The load to be moved
- *The environment in which manual handling takes place.
- *The capability of the individual involved in the manual handling.

Planning and Procedure

- *Think about the task to be performed and plan the lift.
- *Consider what you will be lifting, where you will put it, how far you are going to move it and how you are going to get there.
- *Never attempt manual handling unless you have read the correct techniques and understood how to use them.
- *Ensure that you can undertake the task - people with health problems and pregnancy may be particularly at risk.
- *Assess the size, weight and centre of gravity of the load to make sure that you can maintain a firm grip and see where you are going.
- *Remove any unnecessary packaging, if this will make the task safer.
- *Reduce the size and weight of loads to make handling easier. This could involve suppliers packing items into smaller consignments before delivery or unpacking packages before moving them.
- *Assess whether you can lift the load safely without help. If not, get help. Bear in mind that it may be too dangerous to attempt to lift some loads.

Correct Lifting Procedure

- *If more than one person is involved, plan the lift first and agree who will lead and give instructions.
- *Plan your route and remove any obstructions. Check for any hazards such as uneven/slippery flooring.
- *Lighting should be adequate.
- *Control harmful loads – for instance, by covering sharp edges or by insulating hot containers or anything electrical or dangerous.
- *Avoid lifting unsafe loads, such as damaged glass or badly packed chemicals.
- *Check whether you need any personal protective equipment (PPE) and obtain the necessary items, if appropriate. Check the equipment before use and check that it fits you.
- *Ensure that you are wearing the correct clothing, avoiding tight clothing and unsuitable footwear.
- *Consider a resting point before moving a heavy load or carrying something any distance.

Position

You should always stand in front of the load with your feet apart and your leading leg forward. Your weight should be even over both feet. Position your body (or turn the load around) so that the heaviest part is next to you. If the load is too far away, move toward it or bring it nearer before starting the lift. Do not twist your body over the load to pick it up.

Lifting and moving the load

When lifting you should always lift using the correct posture ensuring you are in a stable, balanced position.

- *Bend your knees slowly but not kneeling, keeping the back straight.
- *Tuck the chin in on the way down.
- *Lean slightly forward if necessary and get a good grip.
- *Keep the shoulders level and in line with your hips, without twisting or turning from the hips.
- *Try to grip with the hands around the base of the load.
- *Bring the load to waist height (centre of gravity) keep head up when bringing up the load, keeping the lift as smooth as possible.
- *Move the feet to change direction do not twist or turn your body, keeping the load close to the body.
- *Proceed carefully, making sure you can see where you're going.
- *Lower the load, reversing the procedure for lifting.
- *Avoid crushing fingers or toes as you put the load down.
- *Position and secure the load after putting it down. Make sure that it is rested on a stable base.
- *Report any problems immediately, for the task to be reassessed.

The Task

- *Carry loads close to the body, lifting and carrying the load at arm's length increases the risk of injury.
- *Avoid awkward movements such as stooping, reaching or twisting.
- *Ensure that the task is well designed and that procedures are followed.
- *Try not to lift from the floor or above shoulder height. Limit the distances for carrying.
- *Minimise repetitive action by re-designing and rotating tasks.
- *Ensure that there are adequate rest periods and breaks between tasks
- *Plan – use teamwork where the load is too heavy for one person and plan your journey.

The Environment

- *Ensure that the surroundings are safe. Flooring should be even and not slippery, lighting should be adequate, and the temperature and humidity should be suitable. If you are going through a door, make sure it is open before you lift the load and that children are not present or do it at a quieter time of day.
- *Remove obstructions and ensure that the correct equipment is used.

The Individual

- *Never attempt manual handling unless you have been trained and given permission to do so.
- *Ensure that you are capable of undertaking the task – people with health problems and pregnancy are particularly at risk of injury.

