# Policy: Manual Handling

**SOMERSET ROAD EDUCATION TRUST MANUAL HANDLING POLICY**

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| **Version and Date** | | **Action/Notes** |
| 1.0 | 05/16 | Approved by MOB 20/5/16 Author Sharon Day SBM |
|  | 05/21 |  |

**SRET – Somerset Road Education Trust**

## Introduction

This document sets out the policy of SRET relating to manual handling; it is designed to be an effective method of controlling the risks to health from manual handling within the Trust’s work and teaching environments. Manual handling causes over a third of all workplace injuries. Manual handling means any transporting or supporting of a load, including the lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying. It also includes moving by hand or bodily force any inanimate load such as a box of paper or parcel, or animate load such as children.

SRET recognises that manual handling operations occur within all of the properties within its control. Procedures and training need to be in place in order to manage the risks to all persons working across the MAT site. Any load in excess of 25kg (for men), 16kg (for women) will be subjected to a manual handling assessment. Injuries maybe caused by:

* Adopting an incorrect method of lifting;
* Attempting to lift something which is too heavy or of an awkward sharp;
* Attempting to lift an object which is sharp or is contaminated with harmful chemicals.
* Difficulties may also be created if the load is of such a size as to obscure vision and in such circumstances trips and falls may result.

## Regulations

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 2002 requires an assessment of risks from manual handling operations to be undertaken with a view to eliminating tasks that present a hazard; or to take action to reduce the risks caused by each manual handling task and to monitor the action taken to assess it’s effectiveness. The Regulations place four main duties on the employer. They are:

* To avoid manual handling operations, where they can be done by other means;
* To assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that cannot be avoided;
* To reduce the risk of injuries resulting from hazardous manual handling operations as far as reasonably practicable;
* To review the risk assessments at appropriate intervals and revise them if necessary.

It is the policy of SRET that all possible steps should be taken to eliminate the risks associated with manual handling in the workplace. As this is not always possible, the Trust will seek to reduce the unavoidable risks. This is through the provision of staff training in the form of advice on good handling techniques and by supplying mechanical aids where appropriate such a “sack-trucks”, pallet-trucks and hoists.

A generic manual handling assessment for the Trust will be completed and made available to all employees. Where an individual’s role will involve prolonged or repeated manual handling, an individual risk assessment will be undertaken to fully understand the risks involved and seek to implement control measures to minimise the risk of a manual handling injury

Where tasks involving manual handling with the potential for injury cannot be avoided, a ‘suitable and sufficient’ risk assessment must be made:

**Task:** Consider whether the task involves

Holding the load at a distance from the trunk – this increases the stresses on the lower back; Twisting the trunk – this should be avoided when lifting or supporting a load;

Stooping – this increases the stress on the lower back;

Reaching upwards – this places higher stress on the back, shoulders and arms;

Excessive lifting or lowering distances – the ideal range for handling a load is around waist height;

Handling while seated – many movements from a seated position will inevitably involve a degree of stooping and/ or twisting;

Excessive carrying distance – the risk of injury increases if a load is carried more than about 10m even if the load is not difficult to handle;

Excessive pushing or pulling of the load

Insufficient rest or recovery periods – this will result in physical and mental fatigue;

Team handling – although used to reduce some risks, team handling can introduce other risks, particularly in relation to good planning and co-ordination of the task.

### Individual – Does the job?:

Require unusual strength, height etc – the task should be suitable for the ‘normal’ working population and not rely on height, strength etc

Create a hazard to those who are pregnant or have a health problem; and

Require special knowledge or training for its safe performance: who should carry out the task. Specialised training or instruction maybe needed. The task may pose an increased risk on those with a physical or mental disability.

**Load:** Consider whether the load is –

1. Heavy? Heavier loads will inevitably place greater stresses on the body ( Any load in excess of 25kg (for men), 16kg (for women);
2. Bulky/unwieldy? If the load is awkward to handle the risk of injury is increased;
3. Difficult to grasp? Such as if they are wet or rounded without hands grips;
4. Unstable or it’s contents liable to shift? Movement of the load or its contents will place changing and possibly unexpected stresses on the body and

# Hot, sharp or dangerous? These characteristics are likely to affect the grip and may make the employee hold them away from the body, resulting in an increased risk of injury.

1. Animate or Inanimate? When lifting babies or children, special considerations may be required.

**Environment:** Consider where there are any of the of following –

1. Space constraints preventing good posture such as restricted headroom or obstacles;
2. Uneven, slippery or unstable floors as these increase the risk of slipping or tripping whilst handling loads;
3. Variations in floor levels or workstations;
4. Extremes of temperature or humidity as this can cause rapid fatigue, impairment of grip and loss of manual dexterity;
5. Poor lighting or contrasting lighting conditions as this increases the risk of collision or tripping.

**Psychosocial Factors:** A ‘suitable and sufficient’ assessment should also consider psychosocial factors such as tight deadlines, excessive workloads, and lack of control over the work and work methods.

## Good Handling Technique

There are some simple things to do before and during the lift/carry:

* Remove obstructions from the route.
* For a long lift, plan to rest the load mid-way on a table or bench to change grip.
* Keep the load close to the waist. The load should be kept close to the body for as long as possible while lifting.
* Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.
* Adopt a stable position and make sure your feet are apart, with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance

Think before lifting/handling. Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Adopt a stable position. The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). The employer should be prepared to move their feet during the lift to maintain their stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.



Get a good hold. Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.

Start in a good posture. At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).

Don’t flex the back any further while lifting. This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.

Keep the load close to the waist. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Keep the head up when handling. Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.

# Move smoothly. The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

Don’t lift beyond your capabilities. There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.

Put down then adjust. If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position

## Responsibilities

All teaching staff, contractors and consultants will:

1. Comply with the requirements outlined within the SRET Manual Handling Policy;
2. Make proper use of manual handling equipment provided for their safety;
3. Co-operate with SRET on health and safety matters relating to manual handling;
4. Inform their Responsible Person if they identify hazardous manual handling activities;
5. Take care to ensure their activities do not put others at risk.

Managers (including Governors & Head Teachers), Business Managers, Heads of Department and Supervisors will:

1. Ensure the adherence of the Manual Handling Policy at the site(s);
2. Ensure there is a suitable Responsible Person for the site;
3. Ensure employees under their control have sufficient and suitable training with respect to manual handling issues where appropriate and that this training is regularly refreshed.

Site Managers, Facilities Manager, Site Manager Responsible Persons will:

1. Assess the risks associated with job roles to ensure that manual handling is eliminated wherever possible and where not possible, that the risk of injury from manual handling is reduced as far as reasonably practicable;
2. Attend all training as instructed by the Governors, Head Teachers or Senior Managers, to ensure manual handling responsibilities are understood and implemented;
3. Oversee employees when carrying out their duties and ensure that correct training and provision of mechanical aids where required have been supplied.

## Training

Manual handling training will be arranged at School level and will be outsourced to external providers such as our H&S Consultant – Wiltshire Council.

## Further information

SRET recommends the HSE publication “Getting to Grips with Manual Handling” available from their website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>. Please cut and paste this link into your browser

## Supporting Documents

## This policy is to be read in conjunction with

## SRET H&S Policy

## Manual Handling Risk Assessment

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| Signature of Chair of Trustees: | Signature of Ex Principal |