

Manual Handling — Safe System of Work

Display a copy where the work is done.

Before you start

- Can this be avoided altogether? Mechanical aid, delivery to point of use, smaller load?
- Assess it with TILE: Task, Individual, Load, Environment.
- Check the weight if it is marked. If it is not, test the load before committing.
- Plan the route. Clear it. Know where you are putting it down before you pick it up.
- Decide if it is a team lift, and if so agree who calls it.
- Check your footing and your footwear.

The numbers that get checked

Item	Requirement	Why
The order of duties	AVOID, then ASSESS, then REDUCE	Getting this order wrong is the most common failing. Training is not step one
Assessment method	TILE: Task, Individual, Load, Environment	Use it every time and record it
Storage height	Heaviest items between knee and shoulder height	Removes the worst postures at a stroke
Twisting	Move the feet, never the spine	The single most useful instruction to give
Guideline figures	HSE publishes guideline weights that vary with the position of the load relative to the body	They are guidelines for filtering, NOT safe limits, and never a legal maximum. Never quote them as limits
Team lifts	One person calls the lift	Uncoordinated team lifts injure people

While you are working

- Stand close to the load with feet apart and one foot slightly forward.
- Bend the knees, keep the back in its natural curve, do not stoop.
- Get a secure grip. Hug the load close to the body.
- Lift smoothly. No jerking.
- Keep the heaviest side towards the body.
- Move the feet to turn. Never twist the spine.
- Put down, then adjust position if needed.

Stop immediately if

- The load is heavier than expected when you test it.
- You cannot see over or around it.
- The route is blocked or the floor is unsafe.
- You feel any pain or strain.
- You are working alone and it needs two.
- You are unsure. Put it down and ask.

Scope and limitations — read before use

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