



# Hazardous Manual Tasks & Ergonomics

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Last Reviewed:	December 2021
Next Review Date:	December 2026
Division/Department:	Corporate Performance
Responsible Officer:	Manager PS&P
HPE CM Record Number:	22/14899

## 1 Associated Policy

Work Health & Safety Policy

## 2 Application

To implement strategies to identify and control Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) and ergonomics across the organisation in accordance with the *Work Health and Safety Regulation* and Code of Practice Hazardous Manual Tasks <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0404#sec.60>.

### Purpose

Injuries associated with Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) and Ergonomics, formally referred to as Manual Handling injuries, account for a significant proportion of Workers' Compensation claims. Due to the number and severity of these claims, their control is of significance. This procedure identifies how HMT and ergonomic risks are assessed and controlled at Council.

### Scope

Hazardous Manual Tasks are activities requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate (living) or inanimate (non-living) object. These activities may stress or strain the body when the force required exceeds the capacity of a person, or the activity is improperly undertaken.

Ergonomics is the science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely.

### Overview

Approximately 50% of all workplace injuries at Woollahra have a manual handling component and as such constitutes the most significant contributor to workplace injury. Manual Handling injuries are preventable and this procedure identifies Council's approach to reducing these injuries in the workplace and as such underpins strategies for continuous improvement in WHS&IM.

### 3 Definitions

Term	Meaning
WHS&IM	Work Health Safety and Injury Management – Councils safety management system.
Musculoskeletal Disorder	An injury to, or a disease of the Musculoskeletal system
Musculoskeletal System	Includes bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments and soft tissues. They work together to support your body's weight and help you move.
Hazardous Manual Tasks	A task requiring a person to push, pull, lift, lower, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing which may exceed their physical capacity.
COP	Code of Practice, not law but identifies the minimum standards to be achieved and offers processes to achieve this.
AS	Australian Standard – law identifies minimum standards to be applied
Animate	A thing that is alive, such as a dog or person
Inanimate	A thing that is not alive, such as a rock, a chair, a book, etc

### 4 Relevant Legislation

#### WHS Act.

- Part 2 Section 17 Management of risks
- Part 2 Section 19 Primary duty of care
- Part 2 Section 27 Duty of officers
- Part 2 Section 28 Duties of workers
- Part 2 Section 29 Duties of other persons at the workplace

#### WHS Regulations.

- WHS, Part 2, Section 17, Management of risks
- WHS Act, Part 2, Section 19, Primary Duty of Care
- WHS Act, Part 2, Section 28, Duties of Workers
- WHS Act, Part 2, Section 29, Duties of other persons at the workplace
- WHS Regulation, Chapter 3, Part 3.1, Clause 34, Duty to identify hazards
- WHS Regulation, Chapter 3, Part 3.1, Clause 35, Managing risks to health and safety
- WHS Regulation, Chapter 3, Part 3.1, Clause 36, Hierarchy of control measures
- WHS Regulation, Chapter 3, Part 3.1, Clause 38, Review of control measures
- WHS Regulation, Chapter 4, Part 4.2, Hazardous Manual Tasks

### 5 Procedure

In order to minimise the risk of Hazardous Manual Task injuries, consideration shall be given to ensuring all workable steps have been taken so that:

- Plant, equipment and containers used in the workplace are designed, constructed and maintained to be as safe as possible when used
- Work practices undertaken are designed to eliminate or reduce the need for Hazardous Manual Tasks activities.
- The work environment is designed as far as possible to be conducive with good Hazardous Manual Tasks and Ergonomic practices.

### 5.1 Step 1 - Identification

It is necessary to identify which work activities qualify as Hazardous Manual Tasks and determine if the work involved in an activity is hazardous to the health and safety of personnel completing the work. In order to do this appropriately, the following methods shall be used:

- a) Analysis of injury statistics.
- b) Consultation with workers.
- c) Direct observation or inspection of equipment, tasks and work areas for activities that include.
  - Sustained, sudden or high force
  - Repetitive movement, sustained or awkward posture
  - Vibration including whole of body or hand/arm.

Complete a **Hazardous Manual Task Survey form** (attachment 1). If any of the questions included on this sheet are answered YES then this classifies this task as being a Hazardous Manual Task. If none of the questions listed in the above form are answered yes then the activity is not considered a Hazardous Manual Task and the above form can be filed in HPE under the area you keep your Risk Assessments.

### 5.2 Hazardous Manual Task Controls

If the answer to any question on the **Hazardous Manual Task Survey Form** (attachment 1) is yes then form [HMT Risk Assessment and Control template \(22/16526\)](#) must be completed to identify the nature of the Hazardous Manual task and application of suitable safety controls. Both forms must be completed in consultation with employees completing the task and their supervisors. Control measures shall be entered onto Work Instructions.

When determining controls the following will be considered;

- Change the design or layout of the workplace.
- Change the work position and include regular breaks.
- Change the nature, size or number of items being handled.
- Use ergonomic equipment
- Inclusion of mechanical aids.
- Streamlining processes and better design tasks.
- Ensuring the environment is supportive i.e. not too hot or cold.
- Ensuring adequate lighting and airflow.
- Good housekeeping and more comfortable hard stand areas.
- Job rotation, regular changes of work activity, take breaks
- Staff trained and competent.

### 5.3 Action Plan

Identified risk control measures shall be recorded on the [HMT Risk Assessment and Control template \(22/16526\)](#) and stored on HPE under that areas container for risk assessments. Any Corrective Actions must be individually recorded on the Incident Reporting System. Established controls will be included in the WHS Risk Register. The outcome of the hazardous manual task reviews will be factored into position descriptions to ensure the “best fit” for prospective employees.

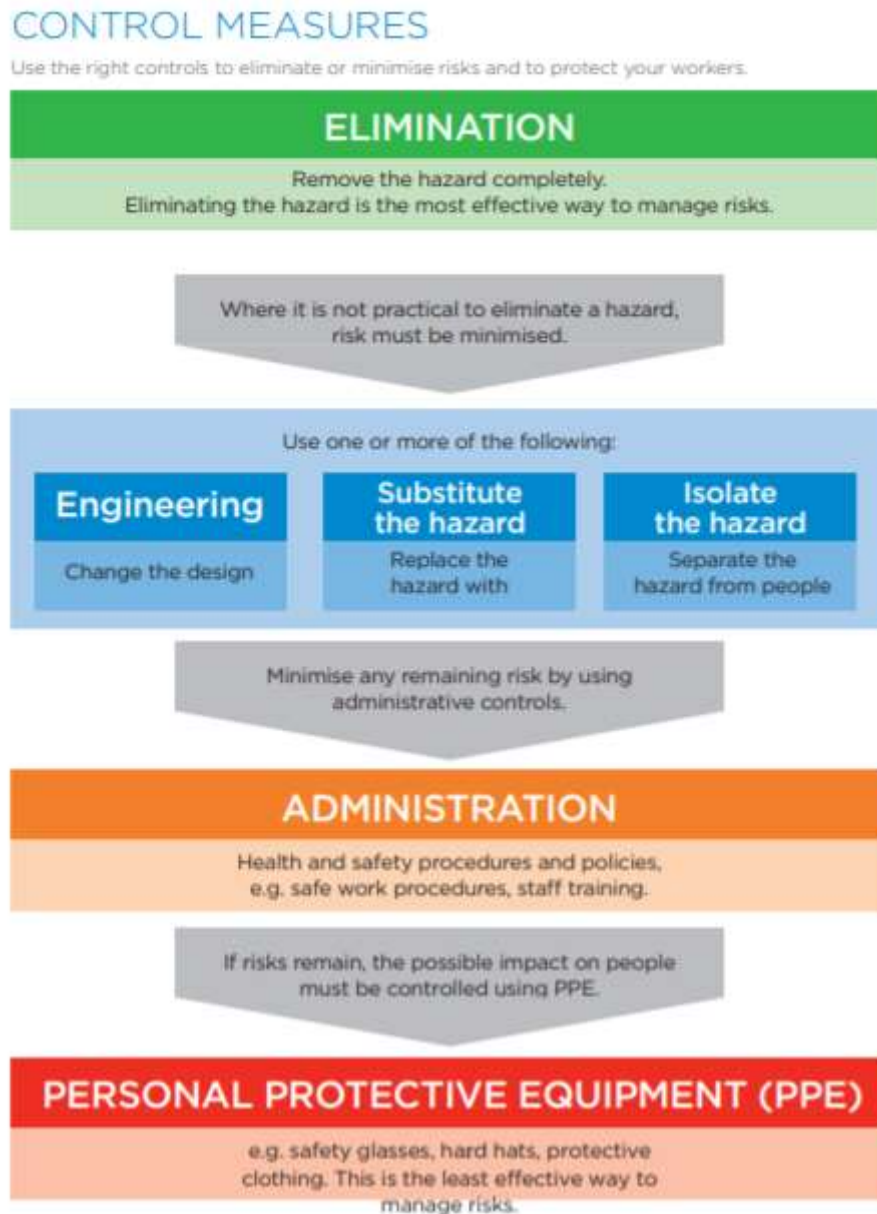
Bi-monthly reports are supplied to the WHS Committee including injury statistics detailing areas of operation, type of injury and cause. On a quarterly basis this information is included in the ELT report to senior management.

On an annual basis a **WHS&IM Review and Planning Report** is provided to the ELT and WHS Committee detailing strategies for continuous improvement in safety inclusive of the above.

It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure all tasks undertaken in their area of report have been identified and listed on Councils [WHS Risk Register \(23/157150\)](#) identifying suitable controls listed for the elimination or if not possible then the reduction of the risk to as low as reasonably

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practicable. The Hierarchy of Controls will be used in identifying suitable safety controls with particular emphasis on higher order controls (elimination, Isolation, substitution, engineering).



**5.4 Stage 5 (Monitor and Review)**

Any injury involving manual handling or ergonomics will have the relevant Work Instruction reviewed as part of the Incident Reporting and review process.

**5.5 Design.**

The best time to eliminate or minimise the risk of musculoskeletal injury is during the design and planning stage when hazards and risks can be designed out before they are introduced into a workplace. Hazardous Manual Tasks and Ergonomic issues will be considered at this time as well as when purchasing plant and equipment [Purchasing Goods & Services](#)

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## 5.6 Ergonomic Assessments

Ergonomics is the science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely. To undertake an ergonomic assessment the following steps should be followed;

1. If an ergonomic issue is identified in the workplace then the person concerned must inform their supervisor and together complete an Incident Report. The online incident report is accessed via the WHS section of The Hub.
2. The Incident Report will be distributed via workflow to the relevant Manager, PS&P and other parties as required.
3. The responsible Manager will review the incident report and instigate an ergonomic assessment to be undertaken by the WC Advisor (PS&P).
4. The WC Advisor will undertake a review of the task and environment by means of completing the form [Workstation Ergonomic Assessment \(22/88\)](#) This will be completed in conjunction with the person who identified the issue.
5. The completed assessment form will then be attachment to the corresponding incident Report.
6. The responsible Manager will review the incident report in accordance with System procedures.
7. If equipment is required (such as a footstool, desk, chair) then the responsible Manager must add a comment to the incident report and arrange for the item be supplied. Office furniture is provided by the Property and Projects section.
8. Once the item(s) has been delivered or installed the responsible Manager will ensure that the person who has identified the issue has had their safety concerns addressed.
9. The responsible Manager will then comment on the incident report that the issue is completed and inform PS&P so that it can be closed.

## 5.7 Stand-up Desks

The purchase and installation of a stand-up desk is the responsibility of the relevant Branch Manager to organise and subject to the following conditions,

1. Any request by an employee for a stand-up desk must be supported by a medical specialist report clearly stating the reason and required usage time in support of a specific RTW Plan.
2. This request must be formally approved by the Manager, equipment must comply with Australian Standards requirements.
3. Once approved by the Manager, an Incident Report must be raised with the relevant documentation attached e.g. specialist report.
4. An IT helpdesk request must be lodged with IT to assist with data connections.
5. A work request must be lodged with Property and Projects to assist with the installation

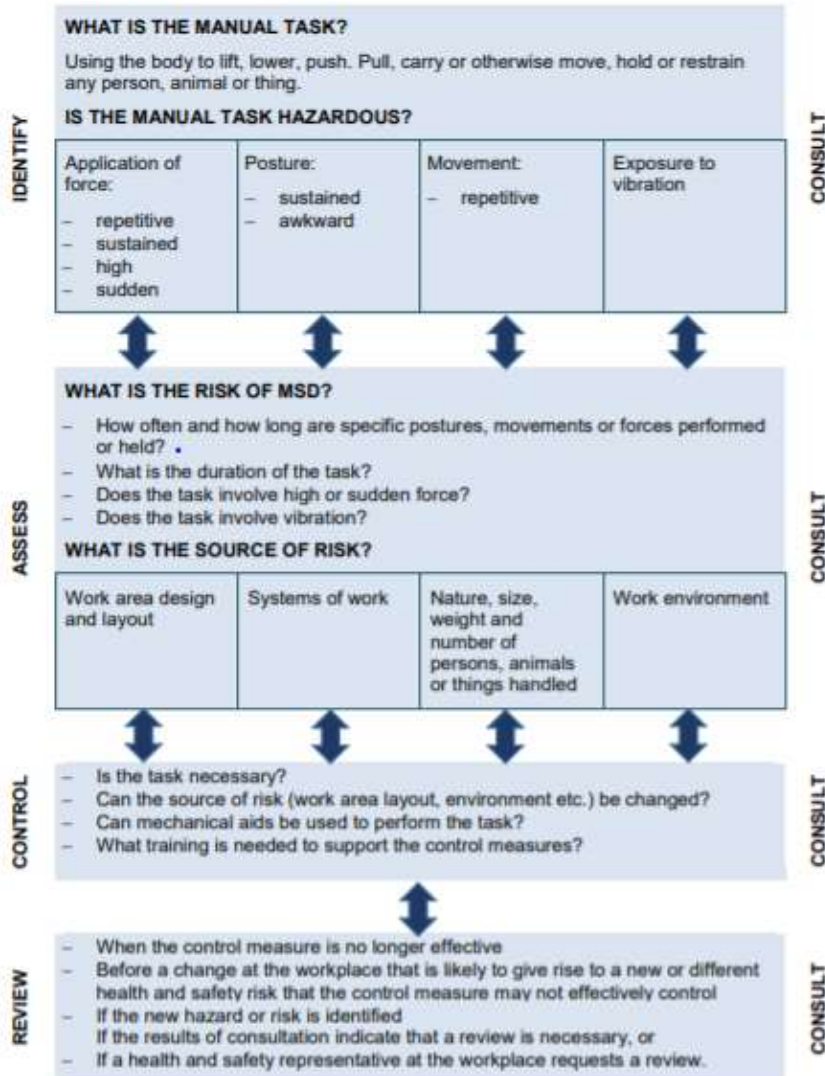
## 5.8 Training

For those areas identified as higher risk for Hazardous Manual Tasks (see Work Instructions) PErforM training will be undertaken by a certified SafeWork accredited trainer

<https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/hazardous-manual->

[tasks/perform#:~:text=What%20is%20PErforM-,Participative%20Ergonomics%20for%20Manual%20Tasks%20\(PErforM\)%20is%20a%20simple%20manual,approach%20for%20reducing%20musculo skeletal%20disorders.](#)

## 6 Flow Chart



## 7 Documentation/References

	HPECM Reference
<a href="#">Hazardous manual tasks</a>	SafeWork NSW COP
<a href="#">Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination</a>	SafeWork NSW COP
<a href="#">Managing the work environment and facilities</a>	SafeWork NSW COP
<a href="#">How to manage work health and safety risks</a>	SafeWork NSW COP

## 8 Related Policies and Procedures

	HPECM Reference
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Consultation and Communication</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Management Responsibilities</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Corrective Actions</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Facilities and Amenities</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Incident Reporting &amp; hazard identification</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Training</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Risk Management</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Auditing</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">Fatigue Management</a>	See WHS section of The Hub
WHS&IM procedure <a href="#">WHS&amp;IM Reporting</a>	See WHS section of The Hub

## Procedure Amendments

Date	Responsible Officer	Description
December 2021	Manager PS&P	New procedure.
May 2022	HS&IM Coordinator	Updated to include PEforM training for HMT.
July 2022	HS&IM Coordinator	Updated to new structure and added doc control
August 2023	HS&IM Coordinator	Updated policy name and hyperlinked associated documentation.
August 2023	HS&IM Coordinator	Enhancement of definitions and update to 5.7 requirements for a sit/stand desk
Sept 2023	HS&IM Coordinator	Clarified process for addressing HMT and linked relevant forms
Sept 2023	HS&IM Coordinator	Clarified requiring specialist report in support of any request for a standup desk.

See Attachment 1 below

**Attachment 1: Hazardous Manual Task Identification Worksheet**

(Use this form to determine whether the task is considered a Hazardous Manual Task)

<b>Hazardous Manual Task Survey</b>			
Area			
Work Instruction			
Date			
<b>Name Print</b>		<b>Signature</b>	
		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the manual task involve repetitive or sustained application of force?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve repetitive or sustained awkward posture?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve repetitive or sustained movement?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve application of high force?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve exposure to sustained vibration?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve the handling of a person or an animal?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the manual task involve the handling of unstable or unbalance loads, or loads which are difficult to grasp or hold?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this work activity a Hazardous Manual Task?		yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
If you answered 'Yes' to any of the questions above, the task is deemed as a hazardous manual task and you must complete a <b>Hazardous Manual Tasks Risk Assessment form</b>			
<b>NOTE:</b>			
Repetitive means an action performed more than twice a minute.			
Sustained means an action done for more than 30 seconds at a time			