

Hazardous Manual Task Procedure

December 2023 - This document is expired. It is replaced by the [WHS Procedure - Risk and Hazard Management](#)

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines how Charles Sturt University (the University) will identify, assess and control hazardous manual tasks.

Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to manual activities undertaken by all Faculties, Divisions, Offices and organisational units of the University and its controlled entities.

Section 2 - Glossary

(3) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Hazardous Manual Task – means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing. It involves one or more of the following factors which could result in injury:
 - i. repetitive or sustained force;
 - ii. high or sudden force;
 - iii. repetitive movement;
 - iv. sustained or awkward posture; and
 - v. exposure to vibration.
- b. Musculoskeletal Disorders – means an injury to, or a disease of, the musculoskeletal system, whether occurring suddenly or over time. It does not include an injury caused by crushing, entrapment (such as fractures and dislocations) or cutting resulting from the mechanical operation of plant. Musculoskeletal disorders may include conditions such as:
 - i. sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons;
 - ii. back injuries, including damage to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, spinal discs, nerves, joints and bones;
 - iii. joint and bone injuries or degeneration, including injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, hands and feet;
 - iv. nerve injuries or compression (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome);
 - v. muscular and vascular disorders as a result of hand-arm vibration;
 - vi. soft tissue hernias; and
 - vii. chronic pain.

Musculoskeletal disorders occur in two ways:

- a. Gradual wear and tear to joints, ligaments, muscles and inter-vertebral discs caused by repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions; and
- b. Sudden damage caused by strenuous activity, or unexpected movements such as when loads being handled move or change position suddenly.

Section 3 - Policy

(4) Refer to the [Work Health and Safety Policy](#).

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibilities

Head of School/Head of Unit

(5) Head of School/Head of Unit is responsible for:

- a. ensuring supervisors undertake their responsibilities in identifying hazardous manual tasks (see Part B of this Procedure); and
- b. providing resources for controlling the risks (see Part B of this Procedure).

Supervisors

(6) In addition to the responsibilities of workers, supervisors are responsible for:

- a. identifying hazardous manual tasks (see Part B of this Procedure);
- b. assessing the risk of hazardous manual tasks (see Part B of this Procedure);
- c. controlling the risks (see Part B of this Procedure);
- d. provision of information and training (see Part B of this Procedure); and
- e. review controls (see Part B of this Procedure).

Workers

(7) Workers are responsible for assisting supervisors in:

- a. identifying hazardous manual tasks (see Part B of this Procedure);
- b. assessing the risk of hazardous manual tasks (see Part B of this Procedure);
- c. controlling the risks (see Part B of this Procedure); and
- d. review controls (see Part B of this Procedure).

Part B - Managing Hazardous Manual Tasks

Identifying Hazardous Manual Tasks

(8) Hazards that arise from manual tasks generally involve interaction between a worker and the:

- a. work tasks and how they are performed;
- b. tools, equipment and objects handled; and

c. physical work environment.

(9) Identify those tasks that have the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders by:

- a. reviewing the duties in position descriptions to identify manual task risks;
- b. consulting with workers/students who are involved in manual tasks to find out what hazards are involved. For example, you could ask workers to identify tasks that:
 - i. are difficult to do (or appear harder than they should be);
 - ii. are very tiring (muscle fatigue reduces work capacity);
 - iii. are awkward or dangerous (for example, difficulty controlling loads); and
 - iv. cause discomfort.
- c. analysing health, safety and workers compensation statistics to find out the number of manual task injuries, the cause of these injuries and where they are coming from;
- d. observing how workplace equipment is set up, and the associated workflows between different areas;
- e. observing workers performing manual tasks, particularly tasks that require awkward postures, movements and repetitive movements;
- f. performing Workplace Inspections to observe how tools, materials and equipment are stored; and
- g. investigating manual task incidents to identify what caused the injury.

(10) You must identify hazards:

- a. before using your workplace or equipment for the first time;
- b. before or during changes to plant and work practices;
- c. while work is being conducted; and
- d. when relevant information becomes available.

(11) Complete a risk assessment for any manual tasks that you have identified as hazardous, unless the risk is well known and you know how to control it. The [Manual Task Risk Assessment Form](#) should be used unless manual handling has taken into consideration in another risk assessment.

Assessing the Risk of Hazardous Manual Tasks

(12) Complete a risk assessment for any manual tasks that you have identified as hazardous, unless the risk is well-known and you know how to control it. [Manual Task Risk Assessment Form](#) should be used unless manual handling has taken into consideration in another risk assessment.

(13) A risk assessment can help you determine:

- a. which postures, movements and forces of the task pose a risk;
- b. where during the task they pose a risk;
- c. why they are occurring; and
- d. what needs to be fixed.

(14) Consider the following factors when conducting a manual task risk assessment:

- a. the posture of the worker;
- b. the forces exerted by the worker and any forces exerted on the worker by the object, person or animal;
- c. speed of movements by the worker;
- d. exposure of the worker to vibration; and

- e. the duration and frequency of the task.

(15) Consider the possible sources of the risks including:

- a. the layout or design of the work area e.g. is the area set up to prevent awkward postures;
- b. the work environment e.g. temperature, humidity, floor surfaces, lighting and obstructions;
- c. the nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things handled including any tools used ; and
- d. work organisation and the system of work e.g. the pace of the work and time constraints.

(16) See the [WHS Procedure - Risk and Hazard Management](#) for more information.

Controlling the Risks

(17) Eliminate, where possible, any hazardous manual tasks and any associated risks.

(18) Minimise the risk, if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk. Control measures should be aimed at minimising the frequency, magnitude and duration of movements, forces and postures by changing the source of risk or the way work is organised. See the [Hazardous Manual Tasks webpage](#) for specific manual task risk controls.

(19) Head of School/Head of Unit must provide resources to control risks of hazardous manual tasks.

(20) See the [WHS Procedure - Risk and Hazard Management](#) for more information.

Provision of Information and Training

(21) Provide information and training on the type of control measures implemented in the risk assessment. Information should be provided to:

- a. workers required to carry out, supervise or manage hazardous manual tasks;
- b. in-house designers, engineers and officers responsible for the selection and maintenance of plant and/or the design and organisation of the job/task; and
- c. Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs).

(22) See the [WHS Procedure - Induction and Training](#) for more information.

Review Controls

(23) Review and, if necessary, revise controls to make sure they work as planned.

(24) Consult with the workers involved in the manual task and their Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to consider the following:

- a. are the control measures working effectively in both their design and operation, without creating new risks;
- b. are workers actively involved in the risk management process? Are they openly raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly;
- c. have new work methods or new equipment reduced physical strain or difficulty;
- d. has instruction and training on hazardous manual tasks and the implemented control measures been successful;
- e. is the frequency and severity of musculoskeletal disorders reducing over time;
- f. is an alteration planned to any structure, plant or process that is likely to result in a worker being exposed to a hazardous manual task;
- g. has an incident occurred as a result of a worker being exposed to a hazardous manual task; and

h. if new information becomes available, does it indicate current controls may no longer be the most effective?

(25) See the [WHS Procedure - Risk and Hazard Management](#) for more information.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(26) Nil.

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