# 10 Manual Handling

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### **Amendment Record**

Amendments will be staffed by the Health, Safety and Environmental Protection (HS&EP) team following consultation with relevant subject matter experts (SMEs) and key stakeholders.

Version No	Date	Text Affected	Authority
1.2	Oct 20	Interim update post-handover of Policy from DSA to D HS&EP.	D HS&EP
1.3	Jan 22	Updated to remove reference to maturity and bring the definition of a competent person in line with the HSE <sup>1</sup> definition of competence.	D HS&EP

# Introduction

1. This chapter provides guidance on the risk assessment process and the responsibilities for implementing control measures in compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHOR) and the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Manual Handling Operations) Regulations to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling so far as is reasonably practicable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.hse.gov.uk/competence/what-is-competence.htm

- 2. Work related injuries resulting in musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for about half of all work related ill-health, many of these are caused by the poor management and practice of manual handling.
- 3. The MHOR require employers to risk assess the transporting or supporting of a load, according to the hierarchy of risk controls<sup>2</sup> including; lifting, putting down, carrying, pushing, pulling, moving by hand or bodily force and introduce management controls to reduce the risk of injury to a level that is as low as is reasonably practicable.

# Roles and Responsibilities

### Managers

- 4. It is the duty of the manager to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that work activities are safe and without risk to health. Where necessary, suitable and sufficient assessments of the risk to the health and safety of Defence personnel from manual handling activities should be carried out by a competent person with the cooperation of supervisors and operators.
- 5. The manager is responsible for ensuring that assessments are in place and that risk control measures are being adhered to and are continually monitored for effectiveness. Managers are also required to assess the effectiveness of risk control measures and identify any further controls that may be required. This is part of demonstrating all that is "reasonably practicable" to reduce risk has been done, and by raising any outstanding issues up through their correct Chain of Command.

#### **Risk Assessors**

6. Wherever there is a potential of harm from manual handling activities, the risk should be assessed and evaluated by a competent person³ (in conjunction with the personnel undertaking the activity) who has knowledge of the process / activity, and in what environments the activity is likely to be carried out. If the person assessing the risk is not the manager, they should inform the relevant manager of the findings of the assessment and, if appropriate, explain the risks and the required control measures to manage them.

#### All Personnel

7. All personnel should comply with Safe Systems of Work, training, etc. provided by management for manual handling activities and report any deficiencies that may be evident. Personnel engaged in manual handling should inform their manager or supervisor of any physical or medical condition that could affect their ability to undertake manual handling operations safely.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Schedule 1 of the Management of H&S at Work Regulations 1999

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A person who has the training, skills, experience and knowledge necessary to perform a task safely and is able to apply them. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence.

#### **Risk Assessment**

- 8. Before carrying out any risk assessment of manual handling operations, first determine whether it is reasonably practicable to avoid manual handling entirely by referring to the flow chart (Annex A). If, following this initial risk assessment, manual handling can be avoided, the manual handling assessment should be terminated and where necessary, movement of the load included in the tasks general risk assessment (JSP 375 Volume 1, Chapter 8).
- 9. If there is a requirement for manual handling, then a risk assessment should be conducted. This can be initiated by a dynamic risk assessment, which in some low risk environments may be sufficient to identify all necessary controls. Where the dynamic risk assessment is thought to identify significant risks, the risks will need to be recorded as a formal risk assessment.

### **Operations Requiring No Formal Risk Assessment**

- 10. The dynamic assessment will be sufficient if:
  - a. loads weighing less than 3 kg, unless task has a high frequency;
  - b. package is not of unusual dimensions or awkward shape;
  - c. temperature is within a comfortable range; and
  - d. lift does not involve extremes of movement e.g. twisting.
- 11. If the operation does not fit into all the above criteria, then a formal risk assessment may be necessary.

### **Operations That May Require a Formal Risk Assessment**

- 12. Annex B provides guidance weights for lifting and lowering for a fully fit adult; loads that fall within these weights do not normally require a detailed risk assessment to be carried out unless the activity is restricted by one or more of the following factors:
  - a. the nature of the load (hot, cold, shape, size, ease of grip, etc.);
  - b. the task or process involved (twisting or over-reaching, high work frequency and process rates etc);
  - c. the capability of the individual (the ability to carry out manual handling safely varies between individuals; the published guidelines may be exceeded once the risk assessment process has been satisfactorily completed having taken into consideration the individual's fitness, age, gender, health and / or previous injuries etc.); and
  - d. the working environment (space, lighting, temperature, floor condition, etc.).
- 13. If in doubt a formal assessment should be carried out.

14. Where the manager is satisfied that no additional risk is present as a result of the above list then there is no requirement to carry out a formal risk assessment.

# **Operations That Will Require a Formal Risk Assessment**

- 15. Where lifting or lowering results in the hands moving out of the zones shown in Annex B, i.e. exceeding the weights stated, a formal risk assessment should be carried out.
- 16. It should be noted that the purpose of these guideline weights is to avoid wasting time and effort when conducting the risk assessment. They must not be regarded as safe weight limits for lifting. This is because there are too many other factors involved.
- 17. If a formal risk assessment is required, this should be completed by a competent person in conjunction with the manager and the personnel undertaking the manual handling operation (this can be done using the MOD Form 5012).

# **Assessing the Risk**

- 18. New assessments should be carried out using this guidance (which requires minimal training) and be conducted by 'competent' persons who have working knowledge of the processes and activities to be assessed.
- 19. Assessments should be carried out taking into account gender, age, and health etc. However, there is no need to assess every individual, it is quite acceptable to do a generic assessment that is common to a group of personnel and / or for similar operations. The main point is to identify the risk of injury and highlight how to make practical improvements.
- 20. Special consideration should be given when lifting operations are to be conducted by young people and new and expectant mothers (see JSP 375 Volume 1, Chapter 19 and 20) with respect to musculoskeletal damage to soft and developing bones / muscles of the individual and the unborn child. For activities or processes that contain a repetitive element, consideration should also be given to the potential for "work-related musculoskeletal disorders" (sore or inflamed joints ((mainly wrists and fingers)), tendon damage, etc).
- 21. The assessment should consider activities and processes, the environment, the individual and the load as well as the interfaces and accumulative effects of their component parts. Therefore, one of the first assessment activities is to:
  - a. fully identify the task;
  - b. identify the load;
  - c. identify the environment in which the task is to be carried out;
  - d. identify who may be carrying out the task; and
  - e. identify any other factors relevant to task e.g. wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE).

- 22. The assessment should consider all circumstances in which the task may be undertaken, hence assessors should have working knowledge of these processes and activities in order to complete a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment.
- 23. The assessment should be recorded on MOD Form 5012 (see guidance for calculations at Annex D). Once completed the assessment should be passed to the responsible manager to implement any recommended control measures.
- 24. If the manual handling operation is to be conducted as a multi-person task, the value of the load cannot simply be divided by the number of people involved. If two people undertake a manual handling operation, the effective load value is assessed as 2/3 of the actual weight and every time the number of people doubles the effective load per person is assessed as 2/3 of the previous load, See fig.1.
- (e.g. 90kg weight lifted by 2 people =  $90 \times 2/3 = 60$ kg per person).

1 person	2 persons	4 persons	HSE L23 States:
90 kg x 1 = 90Kg			"Teams of more than
	$90 \text{kg} \times 2/3 = 60 \text{kg}$		four members are unlikely to work
	<b>—</b>	$60 \text{kg} \times 2/3 = 40 \text{Kg}$	successfully"
			·

Figure 1.

- 25. When using manual handling aids (sack / pallet trolleys etc.) the effort required to move the load can be significantly reduced and the effective load for the purpose of assessment adjusted accordingly. When calculating the effective load several factors need to be taken into consideration: friction, rolling resistance due to the surface over which the load is to be moved, angle of any slope to be negotiated, condition of the mechanical handling aid (bearings, tyres (under inflation), wheel alignment, buckled wheels / axles etc.); and the weight of the mechanical handling aid itself.
- 26. As a general rule, on level ground the effective load for pushing / pulling manual handling aids is 10% of the combined weight of the load AND the manual handling aid AND for every 1° of incline the effective load increases by 1.75%. The following values should be used to calculate the effective load for assessment when using a manual handling aid that is maintained in good condition and used on a smooth surface. e.g. a load of 90Kg on a trolley weighing 10Kg having a combined weight of 100Kg being moved up a gentle slope of 5° will be assessed as a load of 19Kg on the load / frequency graph of the assessment form, See fig. 2

Incline / slope gradient (degrees)	Percentage of combined weight of load & handling aid.
0° Level ground	10%
3°	15% (10% + 5.25% (3 x 1.75%))
5°	19% (10% + 8.75% (5 x 1.75%))
7°	22% (10% + 12.25% (7 x 1.75%))
10°	28% (10% + 17.5% (10 x 1.75%))

Values taken from HSE L23

Figure 2.

#### The Task

#### 27. Does the task involve:

- a. holding loads at a distance from the body? this increases general stress on the lower back;
- b. twisting of the trunk? stress on the lower back is increased significantly if such postures are adopted, even worse is to twist whilst supporting a load;
- c. stooping? this increases stress on lower back, either by bending or leaning forward with the back straight (to be avoided where possible);
- d. lifting above waist height or lowering below mid-thigh? excessive reaching upwards and downwards places additional strain on arms and back, making control of the load to become more difficult and because arms are extended, they are more prone to injury. Lifts beginning at floor level should be avoided where possible and should finish no higher than waist height;
- e. moving a load over excessive distances? long distances are more demanding than shorter ones. Moreover, it is more likely to necessitate a change of grip part way, further increasing the risk of injury;
- f. excessive pushing or pulling of the load? the risk of injury is increased if pulling or pulling is carried out with the hands much below waist height or above shoulder height;
- g. repetitive handling? a small load handled very frequently can create as much of a risk of injury as a one-off handling of a more substantial load. The effect will be worsened by jerky, hurried movements which can multiply the stress placed on the body; and
- h. frequent or prolonged physical effort resulting in insufficient rest or recovery periods? if physical stresses are prolonged during physically demanding work then fatigue will occur, and this increases the risk of injury. Consider rest breaks from tasks to allow recovery e.g. changing to another task, which uses a different set of muscles.

28. The guideline weights shown in Annex B assumes the pace of work is not forced, there are adequate times to rest and the load is not held for any prolonged period of time. The weights suggested must be reduced if the operation is repeated more often.

# **Individual Capability**

#### 29. Does the task:

- a. stretch the employee's physical capabilities to the point of risking injury? In general, the lifting strength of women as a group is less than that of men. To provide protection for working women, guidelines are usually reduced by a third (see Annex B). Individuals' physical capability varies with age normally peaking in the early 20s and declining thereafter becoming more significant from the mid-40s. Therefore, the risk of injury may be higher for employees in their teens or in their 50s or 60s. Young persons (16-18) should be considered a significant risk and special consideration should be given towards that group;
- b. pose a risk due to the employee's present state of health or pose a hazard for those who are new or expectant mothers? Allowances should be made where the manager has been made aware of a new or expectant mother or where it is visibly apparent of a pregnancy;
- c. restrict the manual handling capability of an individual due to a previous history of a back, knee, hip condition, hernia or any other history of problems that may affect their ability to conduct the manual handling task? and
- d. require additional knowledge or training for the task to be carried out safely? the risk of injury will be increased where a worker does not have the information or training necessary for safe performance. Training should cover:
  - (1) how to recognise the risk in manual handling;
  - (2) appropriate Systems of Work;
  - (3) use of mechanical aids; and
  - (4) good handling techniques.
- 30. The Equality Act places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace or employment arrangements to ensure that disabled people are not placed at a disadvantage compared to an able-bodied person. The appropriate ergonomic standards sponsored by Defence or in particular domains should be consulted. Allowances should be made for any health problem which the employer could be reasonably expected to be aware of and which might have bearing on the ability to carry out manual handling operations in safety (advice should be sought from Occupational Health where appropriate).

#### The Load

#### 31. Is the load:

- a. heavy? consideration must be given to reducing the load and / or obtaining mechanical assistance. If this is not possible, then handling by two or more people may make possible an operation that is beyond the capability of one person, thus reducing the risk of injury to a solo operator. However, the load that a team can handle in safety is less than the sum of loads that individual team members could cope with when working alone. One person should plan and take charge of the operation ensuring that the movements are co-ordinated. Team members should preferably be of broadly similar build and physical capability;
- b. bulky / unwieldy? the shape of the load will affect the way that it can be held and can often make it harder to get a good grip:
  - (1) if handlers have to lean away from a load to keep it off the ground they will be forced into unsuitable postures;
  - (2) the bulk of the load can also interfere with vision, thus increasing the risk of slipping, tripping, falling or colliding with obstructions; and
  - (3) should the centre of gravity of the load not be central (or variable, such as a liquid) within the load, the risk of injury is increased.
- c. difficult to grasp? if load is difficult to grasp because it is rounded, smooth etc, its handling will call for extra grip strength which is tiring and will involve inadvertent changes of posture. There will also be a greater risk of dropping the load;
- d. unstable or contents likely to shift? if load is unstable because it lacks rigidity, the likelihood of injury is increased. The instability may impose sudden stresses for which the handler is not prepared; and
- e. intrinsically harmful (e.g. sharp / hot)? risk of injury can arise from the external state of a load. Such characteristics may also impair grip, discourage good posture or otherwise interfere with safe handling.

### **The Working Environment**

#### 32. Consider:

- a. space constraints preventing good posture if the working environment hinders working at a safe height or prevents good posture e.g. working in or moving through a narrow gap, the risk of injury from manual handling will be increased:
- b. uneven, slippery or unstable floors in addition to increasing the likelihood of slips, trips and falls, uneven or slippery floors hinder smooth movement creating additional risk;

- c. variations in level of floors or work surfaces the presence of steps, or slopes can increase the risk of injury;
- d. hot / cold conditions high temperatures, high humidity or cold can cause rapid fatigue. Inappropriate gloves and other protective clothing, which may be required, can also hinder movement, impair dexterity and reduce grip;
- e. strong air movements sudden air movements caused by a ventilation system or a strong wind can make large loads more difficult to manage safely;
- f. poor lighting conditions dimness or glare may cause poor posture; Contrast between areas of bright light and deep shadow can aggravate tripping hazards and hinder the accurate judgment of height and distance; and
- g. moving floor or platform when manual handling is being done loading or unloading a truck, in the back of an aircraft or onboard a ship and the "ground" itself is moving. In these circumstances, specific risk assessments, specialist lifting equipment and even statute may apply in addition.

#### **Other Factors**

- 33. These may include:
  - a. clothing, footwear or PPE. Clothing, footwear and PPE must be adequate for the task being undertaken and allow free movement and posture for the manual handling process being undertaken; and
  - b. goods deliveries and dispatch. Managers should be aware of times, sizes of loads etc. The risk assessment should take into consideration events which may occur outside of the normal parameters (e.g. inappropriate delivery vehicles, damaged packaging etc.).

# **Mitigation and Control Measures**

- 34. The MHORs establishes a clear hierarchy of control measures, the risk assessments must show that these measures have been considered. The hierarchy of control measures are as follows:
  - a. avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable by addressing the following questions:
    - (1) can movement of the loads be eliminated altogether? e.g. can the workplace or task be redesigned to avoid moving loads or could delivery be arranged to the point of use?
    - (2) can operations be automated? and
    - (3) can mechanical devices be used (e.g. trucks, barrows, rollers, handling aids, forklift trucks, sack trucks)?

- b. make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the risk of injury of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; and
- c. reduce the risk of injury for operations so far as is reasonably practicable; this can be done by improvements to the task and load (e.g. reduce the load size and / or distance travelled; consider a team load).
- 35. If an item must be moved, the use of mechanical aids to eliminate the need for manual handling altogether should take primacy; if this option is not reasonably practicable then a review of the task should be undertaken to minimise the need for manual handling (e.g. reducing distance carried from point of delivery to end user).
- 36. Adequate information, instruction and training should be given in order to undertake the task safely. The type of training could comprise of a combination of the following:
  - a. the "Manual Handling Awareness" course (Defence Learning Environment);
  - b. a video;
  - c. manual handling courses run internally and / or externally;
  - d. on the job training;
  - e. task specific training; and
  - f. refresher training, this must be considered when risk assessments are reviewed.
- 37. A video must not be used as a substitute for practical instruction but can be used as part of the training package. The correct lifting techniques are illustrated in Annex C.
- 38. In some instances, there will be resource or other implications (e.g. contractual), which prevent the immediate implementation of control measures. Therefore, the short-term, medium-term and long-term measures should be stated:
  - a. short-term measures may comprise stopping the activity, a briefing in safe lifting techniques, a removal of obstructions;
  - b. medium-term measures could be the provision of mechanical handling aids: and
  - c. longer-term could be the relocation of the storage area due to a unit move or rebuild.
- 39. Managers are required to demonstrate that they have done all that is "reasonably practicable" in the circumstances to reduce risk, this may be demonstrated by raising any outstanding issues up through the correct Chain of Command.

#### Review

- 40. An initial review of the risk assessment and working practices should take place shortly after implementation, in order to check the effectiveness of any new control measures and validation of progress that has been made towards implementation of medium and long-term controls.
- 41. Subsequent reviews should be undertaken:
  - a. when there has been a significant change in the task, procedure or technology;
  - b. there is reason to suspect they are no longer valid; e.g. should an accident or incident occur or a report of musculoskeletal injury; and
  - c. at a frequency proportional to the risk (e.g. high risk 6 monthly; medium risk annually; low risk every 2 years).
- 42. Each review should include the manager's assessment of the effectiveness of control measures, and any further controls that may be required.

### **Retention of Records**

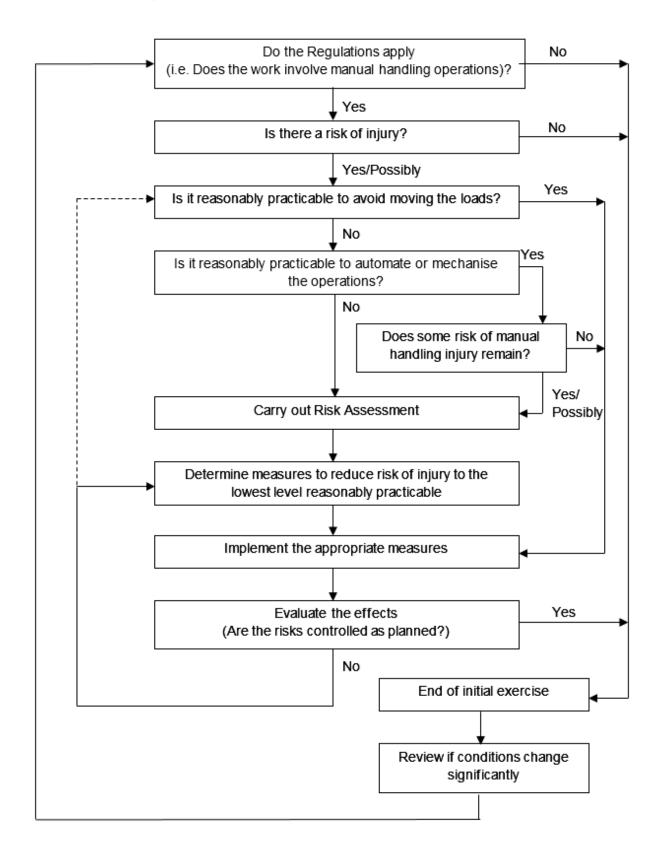
43. All records including the Unit / Establishment Register, Risk Assessments, etc should be kept in accordance with JSP 375 Volume 1, Chapter 39.

### **Related Documents**

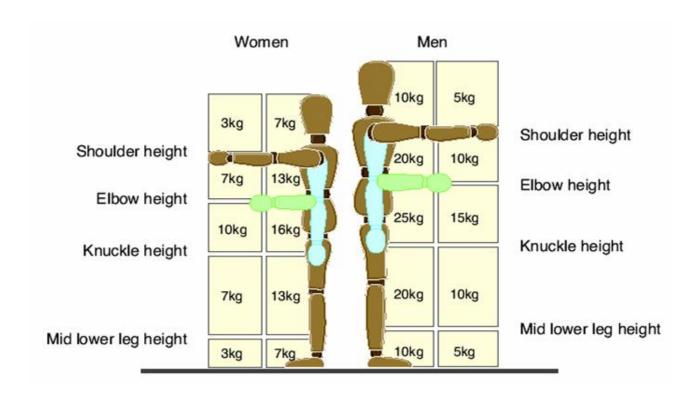
- 44. The following documents should be consulted in conjunction with this chapter:
  - a. JSP 375 Volume1:
    - (1) Chapter 08 Risk Assessment;
    - (2) Chapter 19 Health and Safety of Young Persons;
    - (3) Chapter 20 New and Expectant Mothers at Work; and
    - (4) Chapter 39 Retention of Records.
  - b. Other MOD Publications:
    - (1) DSA01.1 Defence Policy for Health, Safety and Environmental Protection:
    - (2) DSA01.2 Chapter 2 Requirement for Safety and Environmental Management Systems in Defence; and
    - (3) DSA01.2 Chapter 4 Risk Management in Health, Safety & Environmental Protection.

- c. Legislation and Guidance:
  - (1) HSE INDG 143 Getting to Grips with Manual Handling;
  - (2) HSE L23 Guidance on MHOR Regulations;
  - (3) HSG60 Upper limb disorders in the workplace;
  - (4) Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Manual Handling Operations) Regulations.

# **Manual Handling Risk Assessment - Flowchart**



# **Guidance Weights**



NOTE: THE GUIDELINE WEIGHTS SHOWN ARE FOR GUIDANCE ONLY AND ASSUMES THE PACE OF WORK IS NOT FORCED, THERE ARE ADEQUATE TIMES TO REST AND THE LOAD IS NOT HELD FOR ANY PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME. THE WEIGHTS SUGGESTED MUST BE REDUCED IF THE OPERATION IS REPEATED MORE OFTEN.

# **Correct Lifting Techniques**



#### Plan lift

- 1. Ensure that you are wearing suitable footwear and appropriate clothing for lifting.
- Consider the destination.
- Examine Load Is help required with the load?
- Can it be reduced in size?
- Make sure area is free from clutter.



#### Place the Feet

- Approximately shoulder width apart.
- Face the direction intended.
- Leading leg forward.
- Heaviest part of load towards you.



### Adopt good posture

Slight bending of the back, hips and knees



# Get a firm Grip

- Keep arms within boundary formed by legs.
- Ensure that the load is not just on the fingers.
- Elbows close to sides.



### Move the Load

- Lift load to waist height.
- Move slowly to avoid jerky movements.
- Keep close to load.
- 3. Maintain your vision.



#### Lower Load

- Lower load slowly, ensuring back is straight and knees bent.
- Avoid crushing fingers when lowering.
- Put down, then adjust into desired position.

# Calculating the Risk Using the Manual Handling Risk Assessment Form (MoD Form 5012)

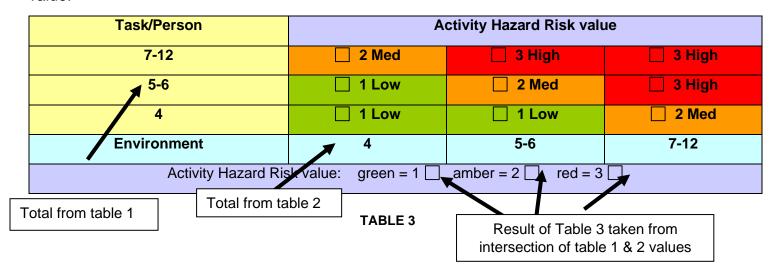
Using Tables 1 and 2 allocate a rating to each element of the task and the environment in which it is to be carried out.

Task/Person	Low = 1	Medium = 2	High = 3	Score
Hand distance from the lower back	Close: Upper arms aligned vertically AND upright trunk	Moderate: Upper arms angled away from body OR trunk bent forward	Far: Upper arms angled away from body AND trunk bent forward	A
Vertical lift region	Above knee AND below elbow height	Below knee AND / OR above elbow height  Above knuckle AND below	Floor level or below <b>OR</b> at head height or above	В
Pushing or pulling	Above elbow <b>AND</b> below shoulder height	elbow height	Above shoulder <b>OR</b> below knuckle height	
Trunk twisting and sideways bending	Trunk neither twists or bends to the side	Trunk twists <b>OR</b> bends to the side	Trunk twists AND bends to the side	С
Grip on the load	Containers with well- designed handles or handholds, fit for purpose OR Loose parts enabling comfortable grip	Containers with poor handles or handholds  OR Fingers to be clamped at 90 degrees under the container	Containers of poor design. Loose parts, irregular objects, bulky or difficult to handle <b>OR</b> Non-rigid sacks or unpredictable loads	D
		•	TOTAL	7

A+B+C+D

Environment	Low	Medium	High	Score
	1	2	3	
Postural, PPE or Clothing constraints	Unhindered	Restricted posture	Severely restricted posture	E
Floor surface	Dry and clean floor in good condition	Dry floor but in poor condition, worn or uneven	Contaminated / wet or unstable footing (sand, rocks, etc)	F
Lighting conditions	Natural daylight or equivalent	Very bright (dazzling) or dull	Dark or impaired vision (e.g. night time or heavy rain)	G
Obstacles on route when carrying	None / Not applicable	Sloping floor, steps, closed doors or tripping hazards.	Up ladders or similar (e.g. climb on vehicle) or steep slopes	Н
			TOTAL	~
	I	TABLE 2	E+F+G+H	

Add up the totals for tables 1 & 2 and using the matrix (Table 3) assign the Activity Hazard Risk value.



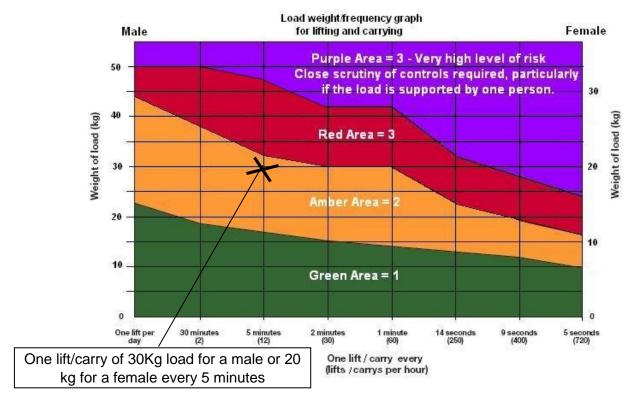
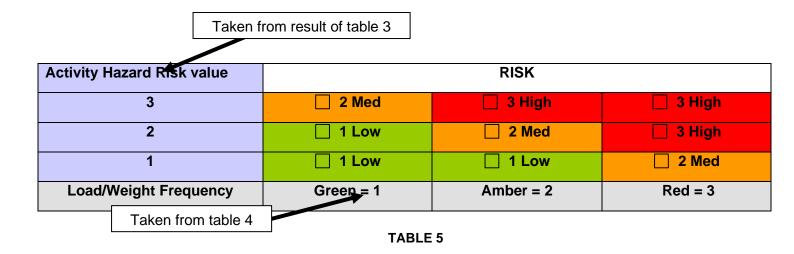


TABLE 4 - values for fully fit person Lifting/carrying a load

Use Table 4 to assign the load weight / frequency hazard value for the lifting and / or carrying aspect of the task using the appropriate weight of load scale (default position being the right-hand female scale unless operation is only likely to be undertaken by male personnel). This table provides a value for the frequency of lifting / carrying weights for a fully fit male using the scale on the left and for a fully fit female using the scale on the right (this is based on the HSE weight guide at Annex B where a 10 kg load lifted by an average female equates to a 15 kg load lifted by an average male; combined with a composite of the HSE MAC tool data graphs for lifting and carrying).

Using the matrix at Table 5, the overall risk is derived from the point where the Activity Hazard Risk value (Table 3) and the Load / Weight frequency value (Table 4) intersect.



However, if the load value falls into the purple zone when all other risk factors are low and the overall risk is medium, then at the assessors discretion the overall risk may be elevated to high risk in Parts 1 and 4 of MoD Form 5012 and the reason (e.g. load is deemed to be excessive) recorded in the Notes box in Part 3.

PART 1 -The Task					
Description:					
This assessment is: Task spe	This assessment is: Task specific Person specific Risk: Low Medium High				
PART 3 – Summary of Contr	PART 3 – Summary of Control Measures & Notes				
Control Measures to be included in work instructions e.g. Information Instruction and Training required.					
Notes	Overall Risk elevated to High due to excessive load value (82Kg)				
PART 4 – Sign off					
Overall Risk	Low		Med		High