

Manual Handling of People Procedure

SAMPLE

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Purpose

The purpose of this Manual Handling of People Procedure is to establish safe, consistent and lawful practices for the manual handling, transfer and physical support of people receiving services from [Company Name]. This procedure aims to:

- Prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and other injuries to workers, clients and others.
- Comply with relevant work health and safety (WHS) legislation, regulations, codes of practice and Australian Standards.
- Promote dignity, independence and comfort for people being assisted.
- Provide clear guidance on risk management, use of mechanical aids and safe techniques.
- Support training, supervision and continuous improvement in manual handling of people.

This procedure applies to all workers, including employees, contractors, agency staff, students and volunteers who are involved in the manual handling, transfer or physical support of clients in disability and aged care settings, including in residential, community and in-home environments.

Scope

This procedure covers all tasks involving the manual handling of people carried out by workers of [Company Name], including but not limited to:

- Assisting with limited mobility (e.g. repositioning, turning, sitting up in bed).
- Transfers between bed, chair, wheelchair, commode, toilet, shower, vehicle and other surfaces.
- Assisted walking, standing and stepping, including use of walking aids.
- Use of hoists, standing lifters, slide sheets, transfer boards and other mechanical or assistive devices.
- Assistance with personal care tasks that involve supporting or moving a client's body (e.g. showering, dressing, toileting).
- Emergency moves and evacuations involving clients.

This procedure does not cover:

- Manual handling of inanimate loads (e.g. equipment, supplies, furniture), which is addressed in the Manual Handling of Objects Procedure.
- Clinical procedures that do not involve significant physical handling (e.g. medication administration, some diagnostic procedures), except where they require positioning or support of the client.

Where workers are operating in third-party premises (e.g. client's private home, residential aged care facility, community centre), this procedure applies in conjunction with any local procedures, provided that the higher level of safety is always adopted.

Definitions

Key Terms

Manual handling of people

Any activity requiring the use of force by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, move, hold, restrain or otherwise physically support another person, including use of mechanical aids.

Client

Any person receiving care, support or services from [Company Name], including NDIS participants, aged care residents, home care clients and respite clients.

Assistive device / mechanical aid

Any equipment used to assist with the manual handling of people, such as hoists, standing lifters, slide sheets, transfer boards, transfer belts, wheelchairs, shower chairs, commodes, adjustable beds and height-adjustable trolleys.

Hoist

A mechanical lifting device used to transfer a person safely between surfaces (e.g. bed to chair), including mobile floor hoists, ceiling hoists and standing lifters.

Individual manual handling plan (IMHP)

A client-specific plan that describes the safest methods and equipment for moving, transferring and physically supporting that client, based on a manual handling risk assessment.

Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)

An injury or disease of the musculoskeletal system, including sprains, strains, back injuries, joint and ligament injuries, nerve injuries and chronic pain conditions.

Reasonably practicable

What is reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters such as likelihood and degree of harm, what is known or ought reasonably to be known, availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise risk, and cost.

Worker

Any person who carries out work in any capacity for [Company Name], including employees, contractors, subcontractors, labour hire workers, apprentices, trainees, students and volunteers.

Responsibilities

Officers (e.g. Directors, Executives)

Officers of [Company Name] must exercise due diligence to ensure that [Company Name] complies with its WHS duties in relation to manual handling of people by:

- Ensuring appropriate resources are provided for safe manual handling of people, including equipment, training and supervision.
- Ensuring that manual handling risks are identified, assessed and controlled as part of the organisation's WHS management system.

- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of manual handling risk controls and this procedure.
- Ensuring incident data, hazard reports and audit results relating to manual handling of people are regularly reviewed and acted upon.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing this procedure within their areas of control. They must:

- Ensure manual handling risk assessments are completed and kept current for relevant tasks and clients.
- Ensure each client has an appropriate manual handling component within their care plan and, where required, an Individual Manual Handling Plan.
- Ensure suitable, well-maintained equipment and aids are available and accessible where required.
- Arrange and verify that workers receive appropriate induction, task-specific training and refresher training.
- Provide adequate supervision, particularly for complex or high-risk transfers.
- Ensure staffing levels and skill mix are sufficient to perform manual handling tasks safely (e.g. two-person transfers where required).
- Take prompt action on reported hazards, near misses and incidents related to manual handling of people.

Workers

All workers must:

- Follow this procedure, safe work instructions and client-specific manual handling plans.
- Use mechanical aids and equipment as specified and not improvise unsafe methods.
- Refuse to perform manual handling tasks they reasonably believe are unsafe and promptly escalate concerns.
- Participate in training and refresh their skills as required.
- Conduct pre-task checks of equipment and environment before each transfer.
- Report hazards, faults, near misses, discomfort and injuries as soon as practicable.
- Support the client's dignity, comfort and independence while maintaining safety.

WHS Personnel / Advisors

WHS personnel are responsible for: