

Hazardous Manual Tasks

Risk Assessment and Control Tool

The Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMTs) Risk Assessment and Control Tool helps you determine if there is a risk of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) from HMTs in your workplace. The tool guides you in identifying and assessing the risk, identifying the source of risk and developing and maintaining control measures.

Note: If you are not aware of hazardous manual tasks in your workplace, the [Identification Tool](#) could be used as an initial step to identify, keep records and prioritise hazardous manual tasks that requires a risk assessment.

This tool supports Appendix D of the [Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2020](#)

Date of assessment:

Position(s):

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Name of assessor(s):

Incident number (if applicable):

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List Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and worker(s) to consult.

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Hazard identification

1 Identify work that involves hazardous manual tasks

Name of work or activity:

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Location of work or activity:

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Describe the work or activity:

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Review of available information:

Records of injuries, incidents and investigations

WHS Committee meeting minutes

WHS or hazard inspection reports

Surveys (i.e., Discomfort Survey)

Compensation claims

Other

Describe the available information reviewed (if any):

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Assessing the risks

2 Is there a risk of MSD?

Ask workers questions to better understand the sources of MSD risks and to help you choose the most effective risk controls.

REPETITIVE MOVEMENT

Repetition means making the same type of movements over and over. Note whether the tasks performed before and after the assessed task place similar demands on the muscles and joints, or whether the postures are different.

1	2	3	4	5
Movement less than every 5 minutes	Movement once every 1-5 minutes	Movement once every 30 seconds – 1 minute	Movement once every 10–30 seconds	Movement once every 10 seconds or less

AWKWARD POSTURE

Consider each joint in the body and how far it is from a neutral comfortable position. It is the joints that are in extreme positions that need particular focus.

1	2	3	4	5
All postures neutral	Moderate deviations from neutral in one direction only	Moderate deviations in more than one direction	Near end range of motion posture in one direction	Near end range of motion in more than one direction

SUSTAINED POSTURE

Consider to what degree a non-neutral posture is held static/fixated without the ability to change position. Note: Sitting and standing postures should not be rated on this scale.

1	2	3	4	5
Non-neutral posture held for < 10 seconds	Non-neutral posture held for 10-30 seconds	Non-neutral posture held for 30 seconds – 1 minute	Non-neutral posture held for < 1 minute to 2 minutes	Non-neutral posture held for > 2 minutes

FORCE EXERTION

Consider the amount of force and speed required to do the task. Force is relative to the body part. Look for signs of workers bracing their bodies, facial grimaces or altered breathing as signs of over-exertion.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimal force <input type="checkbox"/> Slow movements	<input type="checkbox"/> Low force <input type="checkbox"/> Low speed	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate force <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate speed	<input type="checkbox"/> High force <input type="checkbox"/> High speed	<input type="checkbox"/> Maximal force <input type="checkbox"/> Fast, jerky movement

VIBRATION

Consider how extreme the vibration is. Whole body vibration contributes to increased injury, particularly in the back, neck and legs. Hand/arm vibration is primarily a risk factor for the arms, hands and shoulders.

1	2	3	4	5
None		Moderate amplitude		Extreme amplitude

DURATION OF CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE OF TASK

Duration is the exposure to the task without a break. Greater than 30 minutes exposure to risk factors, such as awkward postures or vibration without a break, is considered to have increased risk.

1	2	3	4	5
<10 minutes	10 - 30 minutes	>30 minutes - 1 hour	>1 - 2 hours	2+ hours

TOTAL TIME TASK PERFORMED IN A DAY

1	2	3	4	5
<2 hours	>2-4 hours	>4-6 hours	>6-8 hours	8+ hours

In general, the higher the risk rating or the greater the number of risks present, will result in a greater risk of MSD. If one or more risk factors are in the moderate or high ranges, then the task is a risk of MSD and must be controlled.

Identify the sources of MSD risk

Work area design and layout

Examples include: available work space, workstation design and furniture & equipment

Provide a description of the layout:

Nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things handled

Examples include: loads handled, the tools and equipment being used (e.g., not fit-for-purpose) and mechanical aids.

Provide a description of the things handled:

Systems of Work

A system of work is the way that work is done. Consider how a system of work can influence the: pace and flow of work, time constraints, workload resources and guidance, available control over work, variation of work, support by management, supervisors and colleagues, staffing levels, skill mix and shift arrangements and workplace training. *Consider using a psychosocial hazard risk assessment tool to assess these risks.*

Provide a description of the systems of work:

Workplace environment

Examples may include: cold environment, high temperatures, humid environment, wind, slippery and uneven floor surfaces, obstructions and lighting.

Provide a description of the workplace environment:

Risk control measures

3 Control risks

An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate any risk of MSDs associated with HMTs.
If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, the employer must reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Can the MSD risk from work involving hazardous manual tasks be eliminated? Yes No

If the answer is no:

Can the MSD risk from work involving hazardous manual tasks be reduced?

Can you change the workplace layout? Yes No

Can you make changes to the system of work? Yes No

Can you change the loads, tools or equipment handled? Yes No

Can you change the workplace environment? Yes No

Provide a description of the changes:

Training

Can training be provided to support the above control measures? Yes No

Training to support the risk controls needs to be work specific. Providing 'how to lift' training, like basic instructions to bend your knees and keep your back straight is not effective in reducing injury risks and should not be used as the sole or primary means of controlling the MSD risk. HMT training should include the following:

- ♦ How to do the work safely? (i.e., using mechanical aids, tools, equipment, safe work procedures)
- ♦ How to report problems or maintenance issues? (i.e., reporting an injury and/or reporting a faulty mechanical aid)
- ♦ How to identify HMTs?
- ♦ How to assess MSD risk from HMTs?
- ♦ How control measures are being used in the workplace to minimize the risk of injury?

Provide a description of the training/information

Training must be reviewed regularly.

4 Implementing risk control measures

When will these controls be implemented?

Review and revision of risk control measures

5 Review and revise the controls

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Consultation has been undertaken with relevant workers and HSR Yes No

The assessor should consider:

Have the controls implemented reduced the risks? Yes No

Have any new risks been created by the controls? Yes No

Can further controls be implemented to reduce the risk further? Yes No

Can you change the workplace environment? Yes No

Observations and further controls

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