

## How to lift position paper – Frequently Asked Questions.

These FAQs have been developed to be read in conjunction with the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA)<sup>1</sup>, position paper on 'How to lift' training.

### **If How to Lift training is not an effective method for managing hazardous manual tasks in the workplace, then what is?**

Following risk management principles specific to hazardous manual tasks, in consultation with your workers.

This looks like;

- Identifying which manual tasks are hazardous (manual tasks that expose a worker to one or more hazardous manual tasks risk factors – see table 1.)
- Determining why a task is hazardous (i.e. you need to determine the source of the risk. See table 1)
- Eliminating the hazard, then controlling any remaining risk by following the hierarchy of control. Your control measure(s) should address the source of the risk
- Maintaining and reviewing the control(s) to ensure continuing effectiveness

Note – Following a risk management cycle will help you meet your Work Health and Safety obligations

### **The position talks about hazardous manual task risk factors and the sources of risk, what are they?**

Table 1 – Hazardous manual task risk factors and sources of risk

<b>Hazardous manual task risk factors</b> (Being exposed to one or more of these can lead to an injury)	<b>Sources of the risk</b> (These are the things that are responsible for a risk factor being present):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repetitive or sustained forces</li><li>• High or sudden forces</li><li>• Sustained or awkward postures</li><li>• Repetitive movement</li><li>• Exposure to vibration</li><li>• Duration and/or frequency of the task (when one or more of the above risk factors is present)</li><li>• Mental stress / work pressure</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplace design and layout</li><li>• Systems of work including organisational and psychosocial factors e.g. work rate, lack of job control</li><li>• Work environment e.g. poor lighting</li><li>• The nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things involved in the task</li></ul>

For example – it may be due to the layout of the work area that a worker is in an awkward posture, or the work procedures may impose repetitive movement.

Note - How to lift training does not address the source of the risk, or a worker's exposure to hazardous manual tasks risk factors.

<sup>1</sup> The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) comprises senior representatives from the work health and safety regulators in the Commonwealth and states / territories of Australia and New Zealand. The 'How to lift' training position paper was developed by a HWSA MSD working party, whose membership comprises representatives from: Comcare, SafeWork NSW, SafeWork SA, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, WorkSafe Tasmania, WorkSafe Victoria, WorkSafe WA and WorkSafe New Zealand.

### **Is “how to lift” training a requirement under WHS/OHS laws?**

No, there is no prescribed requirement for a business to provide how to lift training.

This position was written to clarify that providing how to lift training is not a requirement under any Australian or New Zealand work/occupational health and safety legislation.

### **What training should be provided to workers in relation to hazardous manual tasks?**

As stated in the position statement (and Australian Codes of Practice/Compliance Codes), training should cover

- manual task risk management, including hazardous manual task risk factors and sources of risk
- specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them
- how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures
- how to report a problem or maintenance issues

### **Are pre-work stretching and exercises good methods for controlling hazardous manual task risks?**

These programs do not address the source of the risk, or a worker’s exposure to hazardous manual tasks risk factors. You must follow the risk management principles specific to hazardous manual tasks (refer to Q1 above)

### **When looking to engage a service provider to assist our business manage hazardous manual tasks, what should I look for?**

- A provider that is aware of and operates in line with the HWSA ‘how to lift’ position statement.
- They have a thorough understanding of the legislative requirements for managing hazardous manual tasks.
- Knowledge and experience in identifying hazardous manual tasks, and conducting hazardous manual task risk assessments that identify the source/s of risk
- They focus on, and have the ability to, identify interventions that follow the hierarchy of control and address the source/s of risk.
- A provider that utilises a consultative approach with relevant workers.

Note – it is advisable to get the provider to show you examples/references of how they follow the above points.