

Manual Handling Project Discussion Paper

Establish a project team and develop a project plan with identified deliverables and timelines, carrying out a force-field analysis with a cross-section of stakeholders will help with this. Refer to the "Project Issues" documentation later in this publication.

Suggested manual handling project steps

1 Some thought needs to go into the make up of the project team. It helps to have some people with technical knowledge of the area being investigated, people who are influencers, whether that be formal or informal and those receptive to change. Sometimes if you have someone who is not receptive to change it helps to put them on the team to be part of the change process. Having people with a sense of humour is always a good idea.

2 Carry out a literature review, the A.C.T. Code of Practice Manual Handling is a good start

3 Analyse personal damage occurrences ("accidents") to identify where manual handling personal damage is occurring, the frequency, duration and cost of manual handling injuries

4 Using the Pareto Principle identify the priority areas for action

5 Select and engage a suitable ergonomics consultant to carry out an overview analysis of your manual handling risks, provide general training as appropriate, train a small team of your safety staff, supervisors and operational employees in simple ergonomic risk assessment techniques so they can carry out risk assessments in the field.

6 The consultant to review and advise on remedial action stemming from the field risk assessments.

Look at type of work, layout, weights, location, duration, condition of objects being lifted, awkward loads, handling of people etc.

7 A end of project report should be conducted Required changes should be budgeted for and implemented.

General

When it comes to developing controls I have found Haddon's 10 countermeasures are superior to the Hierarchy of Controls.

Some of the things you can do are change the people, change the task, engineer the task out, re-design the task, change the workplace, use exercise / stretches, rest breaks, changing the roster, introduce procedures developed using Job Safety Analysis, physical fitness programs, change packaging / delivery methods, use purchasing specifications, consultation with workers, train employees in manual handling techniques (largely a waste of time unless physical changes are implemented), introduce checklists for the workers to use prior to carrying out manual handling tasks

The success really comes from analysing the tasks and introducing appropriate changes and controls

Passive controls rather than active controls are preferred

Do not forget the contractors, visitors and others

Need to get some runs on the board quickly

Focus on the things that give you the biggest bang for your buck

Document thoroughly what you have done

Go to great lengths to consult with the people actually doing the work

Give & receive regular feedback

Put a lot of work into defining the scope of the project.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE in a way that inspires. Face to face communications is preferred, written communication must be succinct. Limit general correspondence to preferably 1 page, 2 pages at the max.

Set huge but realistic goals.

Networking with OHS professionals in other organisations with similar risks may be appropriate