

Work procedure checklist for Hazardous Manual Tasks

Preventing musculoskeletal disorders from everyday construction work

There are many core construction tasks, such as concreting, steel fixing, formwork and operating mobile plant, with hazardous manual tasks (HMTs) risk factors that can result in musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) / sprain or strain injuries.






HMT risk factors are often overlooked in safe work procedures or work instructions.

To prevent MSDs in construction, it's critical to identify and manage HMT risk factors alongside other hazards associated with the activity or task.

When to use this checklist

Use this checklist before starting construction tasks to determine if any of the below risk factors are present. This will help determine if the safe work procedures or work instructions also need to address risks from HMTs and include controls to minimise MSD risks. This checklist may be considered in addition to your organisation's standard safe work procedures or SWMS review checklist.

Risk factors

				
High, sudden, repetitive or sustained forces	Awkward or sustained postures	Vibration	Repetitive movements	Duration and frequency

Learn more about [identifying and assessing HMT risk factors](#).

Duties of Principal Contractors

Principal contractors (PC) have a duty to eliminate or minimise the risk from HMTs for all workers including subcontractors where the source of risk on site is outside the subcontractor or worker control. This can include:

- work area layout, including location of set down areas and access ways
- things being handled, such as the size and weight of materials specified
- environmental factors including the floor surfaces and lighting
- work organisation, such as time pressures and work pace.

Often the PC can eliminate or minimise these sources of risk, especially when it's identified and considered at the design and planning stage.

If the source of risk is outside a subcontractor's control, PCs should ensure the safe work procedure includes opportunities for consultation between the PC and subcontractor.



The following are not acceptable controls for Hazardous Manual Tasks:

- ✗ using safe lifting technique (e.g. keep back straight and bend knees)
- ✗ relying solely on warm up and stretch activities
- ✗ relying on stronger workers
- ✗ incentives that increase pace and encourage workers to skip their breaks or work longer hours.

Checklist

Does the work procedure or SWMS have the following?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/action
Reference to current SA HMT legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Health and Safety Regulation 2012. Reg 60. • Hazardous manual tasks Code of Practice 2020. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
A HMT specific risk assessment tool is used, for example HMT Risk Assessment and Control Tool .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All relevant HMT risk factors for the task are identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high, sudden, repetitive or sustained forces • awkward or sustained postures • repetitive movement • vibration • duration and frequency 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Controls target the sources of risk for each identified risk factor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work area design and layout • nature of item being handled – weight, size, quantity • system of work / how work is organised • work environment. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Higher order controls from the hierarchy of controls. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or design out HMTs • use mechanical aids • changes to work area layout and system of work (such as the location of storage and delivery areas, consideration of staff resources available and roster lengths to manage workload and break-taking). For examples of controls see the Hazardous Manual Tasks risk register and the HMT – Examples of control measures .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clearly specifies what equipment to use and how to use it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Opportunities identified for consultation between PC and contractors to discuss risk management of HMT. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe design forums • preplanning workshops • regular site meetings to plan crane usage, delivery locations. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

This tool has been adapted from Work procedure checklist to control hazardous manual tasks PN12689 – Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.