FAST FACT, REF NHSF:008:02:I1

HSE NATIONAL MANUAL HANDLING AND PEOPLE HANDLING POLICY 2025

FAST FACTS *provide a brief overview of various health and safety topics to support our managers, employees, safety representatives and others. Why not bring this to your Safety Committees/Departmental Meeting for discussion? Additional information is available by visiting our website at: https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/health-and-safety/*

This FAST FACT provides a brief overview of the **HSE National Manual Handling and People Handling Policy 2025.** The policy can be downloaded here.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

Many manual handling activities do not present an increased risk of musculoskeletal injury and are part of everyday work activities. Movement and exercise are key to good spinal health. It is where the manual handling of loads involves a risk of injury particularly to the back, the employer must take measures to avoid or reduce the risk of injury.

DEFINITION(S) (AS PER POLICY)

Manual Handling refers to the handling of inanimate objects and loads and **People Handling** is used to refer to the manual handling of people.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the HSE to reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with manual handling and people handling activities in line with legislative requirements.

The key steps in managing manual handling and people handling risks involve:

- Avoiding manual handling and people handling activities which involve a risk of injury
- Assessing the risk of injury from manual handling activities that cannot be avoided and implementing controls where necessary.
- Providing relevant information, instruction, training and supervision.

Where the manual handling of loads (people and inanimate loads) cannot be avoided, the HSE will take appropriate organisational measures or employ appropriate means to satisfactorily reduce any associated risks utilising a risk assessment process.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to support compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and associated regulations by:

- Establishing organisational responsibilities in relation to the management of manual handling and people handling.
- Establishing a manual handling and people handling risk assessment approach to avoid or reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with manual handling and people handing activities.
- To provide the highest quality of care to service users.

MANAGER'S KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure risk assessments for their area of responsibility are completed and reviewed in consultation with employees as per section 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the Policy.
- Monitor and evaluate on a regular basis to ensure that all control measures are effective and continue to meet the requirements to eliminate or reduce musculoskeletal injuries**.**

EMPLOYEE'S KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Undertake dynamic risk assessments prior to undertaking manual handling and/or people handling tasks
- Inform the line manager of any reason (e.g. musculoskeletal injury, disability, illness or pregnancy), which might affect their ability to perform manual handling and people handling tasks or increase the risk presented

Detailed Roles and Responsibilities are detailed in the HSE National Manual Handling and People Handling Policy 2025

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessments utilise an ergonomic approach which involves considering the risk factors associated with the Task, Individual, Load, Environment and Other risk factors commonly known as **TILEO.** In the context of manual handling (inanimate loads) and people handling, risk assessments include:

- **Work Place Manual Handling Risk Assessment -** This is an assessment of the work place in which manual handling (inanimate loads) and people handling activities occur (e.g.) ward/department/ambulance base/home environment. Refer to section 3.2.1 of the Policy
- **Task Specific Manual Handling (inanimate loads) and People Handling Risk Assessments** (see below)
- **Service User Specific Clinical Risk Assessment and Moving and Handling Plan -** Where a service user cannot move independently a Service User Specific Clinical Risk Assessment and Moving and Handling Plan must be carried out with the appropriate clinician(s) which informs the care plan. Refer to section 3.2.4 of the Policy
- **Dynamic Risk Assessment** (undocumented) - Ongoing dynamic risk assessment (continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk) forms a key part of the risk assessment process

TASK SPECIFIC MANUAL HANDLING (INANIMATE LOADS) AND PEOPLE HANDLING RISK ASSESSMENTS

The revised HSE approach to task specific manual handling (inanimate loads) and people handling risk assessment is outlined in Figure 1 of the HSE National Manual Handling and People Handling Policy *and below*. This approach will guide managers in determining the appropriate task specific risk assessment pathway and signpost the use of the appropriate forms. For risk assessment pathways refer to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the Policy .

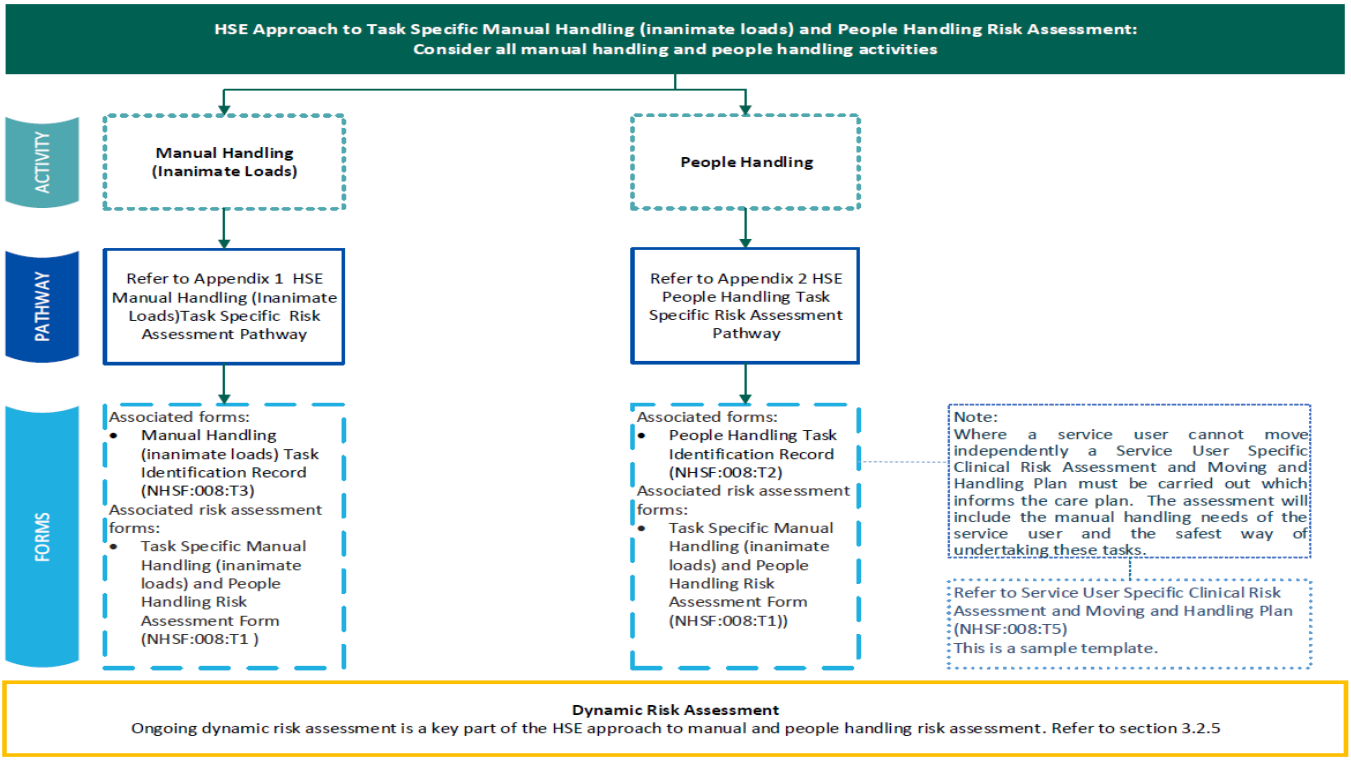

Figure 1— HSE approach to task specific manual handling (inanimate loads) and people handling risk assessment

RELATED GUIDELINE

HSE National Guideline for the Safe Moving and Handing of Service Users with Bariatric Needs 2025

The handling of service users with bariatric needs presents a specific challenge, and local guidelines and or standard operating procedures (SOP) are required to be in place. For further information please refer to **HSE National Guideline for the Safe Moving and Handling of Service Users with Bariatric needs.**

SUPPORTING RESOURCES—Training Modules

HSeLanD Training Modules:

- Managing Manual Handling in a Clinical Setting
- Managing Manual Handling in a Non-Clinical Setting

SUPPORTING RESOURCES—Documentation

Workplace Manual Handling Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet

Worked Example Risk Assessments

Worked Example SOPs

Technique Booklet for supporting Manual Handling and People Handling Training the in the HSE