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## MANUAL HANDLING

BIGGA'S Health & Safety series produced by Xact



**Manual Handling is defined as 'any transporting or supporting of a load, including pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying or moving by hand or bodily force'. We all carry out manual handling in our daily lives e.g. lifting golf clubs/carrying items at work. Manual handling has the potential to cause injury if loads are not lifted/moved correctly. Some injuries may be relatively minor e.g. muscle/joint strains that clear up in a few days. More serious or chronic injuries may result in people having to change jobs or even blight their quality of life due to recurrent pain. Once joints/discs in the spine are damaged a full recovery isn't always possible and pain/restriction of movement can result. It is therefore important when carrying out manual handling that the correct handling procedures are adhered to.**

Manual Handling at work is subject to H&S regulations. The Regulations require employers to assess the risks and put procedures in place to minimise risk of injury. Employees have a duty to follow procedures, make proper use of equipment provided and generally co-operate with the employer on H&S matters.

Important steps to be considered when carrying out a Manual Handling task:

**STOP AND THINK** Can I lift the load? Plan the lift/move by checking the weight of the load and the route. Is the route free from obstruction? Can the load be split up into smaller parts?

**DO I NEED HELP?** Can you lift the load on your own? If not, who/what is available to assist.

**STAND CLOSE TO THE LOAD** Wear appropriate footwear. Feet apart, unlock the knees creating a stable base for lifting.

**LOWER YOUR BODY TO THE LOAD, TAKE A FIRM GRIP** Move the load close to your body. Your waist should be close to the height of the load before commencing lifting.

**LOOK UP** You always see a weightlifter's face.

**STAND UP** Using all the relevant muscles naturally, keep the load as close to the body as possible, do not twist, avoid jerky movements.

**LIFTING ABOVE SHOULDER/HEAD HEIGHT** When lifting above shoulder height, break the lift into two parts, resting load on a suitable weight-bearing surface to change your stance and grip.

**PLACING THE LOAD DOWN** The reverse procedure should be used i.e. bend the knees, not the back, to place the load down.

**STAIRS** When carrying loads up/down stairs it's essential the load doesn't block your vision. Loads should be broken down into smaller amounts - Loads that cannot be broken down/are too heavy to lift with one hand should be moved using an approved stairs trolley.

**TRAVEL DISTANCES** Wherever possible mechanical aides should be used to move loads distances.