

# Cafcass Health and Safety Guidance Document

Manual Handling Risk Assessment			
Applicable safety procedure	Cafcass – SP12	Revision 1	Date of Issue: 31/7/03

## Introduction.

Regulation 4(1)(b)(i) of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 requires suitable and sufficient risk assessments to be made of all Manual Handling operations which involve a risk of injury.

The principle objective of the Manual Handling risk assessment is to help determine if enough is being done to safeguard the health & safety of employees from Manual Handling activities and to identify any further control measures as required to protect Cafcass staff from injury.

This guidance note serves to provide a general understanding of the principles of Manual Handling Assessment and in particular may be used as the operational guidelines for Cafcass Risk Assessors to follow when conducting such assessments.

**Manual Handling Operations** are activities that require the supporting or transporting of loads by bodily force. This definition therefore includes the Pushing, Pulling, Lifting, Lowering and Carrying of loads.

The requirement within the Cafcass procedure (Cafcass-SP12) is to assess the risks of injury from Manual Handling activities and therefore the above definition is key to understanding what it is that is required to be assessed.

The following guidance may be used to assist the assessor with the practical task of carrying out an assessment. It should not be applied without having first read the Cafcass-SP12 Safety Procedure and having received appropriate training in Manual Handling assessment principles as outlined in para. 2.1.6 of that procedure.

## Operational Guidance on Conducting a Manual Handling Assessment.

1. Print out a blank Manual Handling Assessment form (Appendix C to the procedure). The template has been produced to allow the assessment of up to 8 activities, so photocopy a few blank sheets to get you started.
2. Now go for a walk through your office and try to identify all activities that involve some degree of Pushing, Pulling, Lifting, Lowering or Carrying activities. Ask questions of the other colleagues to identify tasks that they may perform. Remember to consider the tasks that may take place

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occasionally. Consider activities that are performed away from the office too.

Note: Where different people perform similar types of activity and the loads and tasks are considered to be similar, generic terms may be used (e.g storage and retrieval of files from filing cabinets). This would assume the cabinets and files are generally the same otherwise a separate activity would need to be listed.

3. On the assessment form record the description of the activity in the relevant box. Be concise. Use your judgement to exclude those tasks that clearly would present little risk.
4. Refer to the Numerical guidelines for Manual Handling Assessment and gauge whether the listed tasks fall within the guideline figures as provided.
5. If the task is within the guidelines, record a “NO” in the “Significant risk of Injury” box. The task is considered relatively safe and would require no further action.
6. If the task falls outside of the guidelines, record a “YES” in the “Significant risk of Injury” box.
7. Unless you have access to weighing scales, use your judgement to determine the weight of the load. If in doubt, record a “YES”.

Note: Numerical guideline weights such as those shown in the following chart can help in deciding if a detailed assessment is needed. They are not weight limits, but rather a tool to assist in assessing the likely degree of risk from manual handling activities.

Each box in the diagram shows guideline weights for lifting and lowering. Work outside these guidelines is likely to increase the risk of injury and will require further control measures in order to prevent or adequately control the risks of injury.

Working within these guidelines does not mean the work is safe just as working outside them does not necessarily mean it is dangerous. The decision on whether the work involves risk or not depends on a sound assessment.

8. For each activity identified as a “YES”, consider if it is possible to avoid that activity or whether it can be mechanised in some way to reduce the amount of physical effort required of the person performing the task.

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Note: This part of the process will often involve the Business Manager / Line Manager to help decide appropriate courses of action.

9. Where it is possible to avoid or mechanise the activity, record a “YES” in the appropriate box and then give details (if known) of the device and system that is to be implemented.
10. Where it is not possible to avoid or mechanise the activity, record a “NO” and then give details of the measures that are to be implemented in order to perform the task safely.
11. In some cases, it will be seen that adequate control measures will not be in place to control exposures and therefore record any additional actions required to be introduced on the action plan section of the form (Part B).
12. Create the assessment as an electronic document in line with the record keeping procedures outlined in 2.6 of the Cafcass safety procedure SP12
13. The assessor should print their name and enter the date of the assessment. Enter a review date of 2 years unless the hazards are significant enough to warrant an earlier review.
14. Where Trade Union Representatives assisted with the assessment, their name and union body should be entered also.
15. Arrange for a follow up meeting with the relevant line Manager to discuss and agree the findings of the assessment and the required control measures. Where further control measures are required, line Managers must ensure that the action plan is developed and managed.
16. The line Manager will sign and date the assessment form indicating that they have read and that they understand the assessment findings.
17. The line Manager will ensure that the findings of the assessment are communicated to staff and trade union representatives and will arrange for training as appropriate to ensure the activities are performed safely.

## **General tips for assessors:**

The guideline figures show that lifting from waist height is less likely to cause injury than from the floor or from height, so especially look for tasks that force us to reach or to stoop.

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A box of A4 photocopier paper weighs in the region of 12.5 Kg, so if it is stored on the floor it will present a significant risk of injury.

Remember that performing a manual-handling task where our spine is twisted will greatly increase the risk of injury, even from light loads, so look out for tasks that force this posture.

In many situations it will not be possible to accurately measure the weight of an object to determine significant risk and therefore a subjective view of risk is acceptable. (i.e. an estimate of the likely weight.)

Take into account personal medical conditions. Ask those performing the task if they have specific concerns or conditions that would require special measures. Record this on the assessment form.

Ensure that activities involving stooping or twisting are redesigned to prevent these very dangerous postures.

If in doubt, the Health & Safety Advisor or Business Manager should be contacted for advice.

**Typical Office type Manual Handling Hazards and Controls:**

As a general principle, the most effective way to prevent injury from Manual Handling activities is to avoid it. This may be achieved by redesigning the activity to remove the need to manually handle loads. The following table gives a guide to the common manual handling hazards found in office areas and some suitable control measures to consider.

<b>Typical task</b>	<b>Typical control measure</b>
Transportation of loads over distances	Use of appropriate trolley or break loads into small ones. Team lift.
Storage and retrieval from high level.	Split the loads into small ones. Ensure appropriate steps.
Storage and retrieval from low level.	Store at waist height. Split loads into small ones. Adopt safe lifting technique.
Carrying loads up / down stairs	Ensure small loads otherwise team lift. Ensure clear route. Provide help with opening doors. For heavier loads consider special stair trolley.
Repetitive handling tasks	Modify the job design to allow for frequent breaks and changes to work routine.

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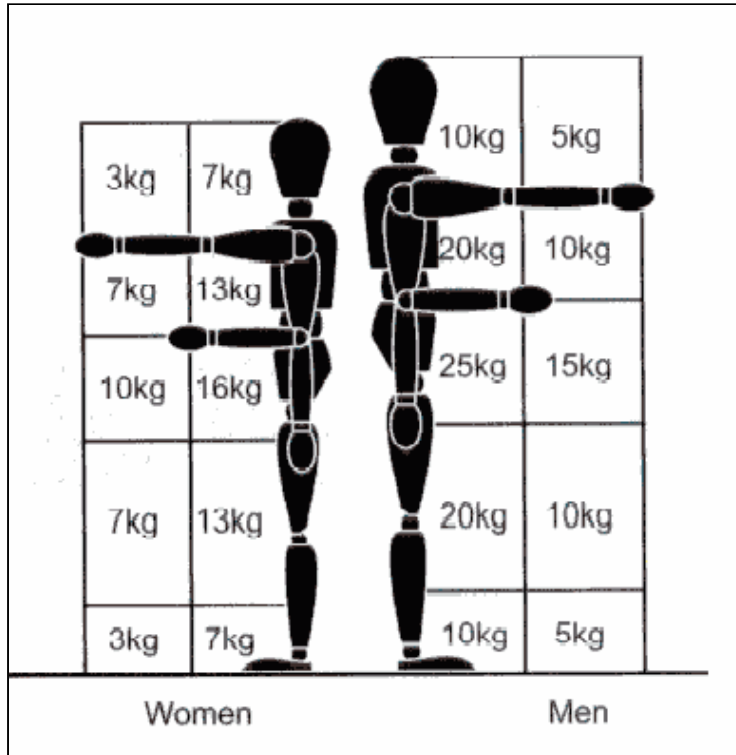
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## Numerical Guideline Figures for Manual Handling Assessment

Handling while seated:

Men – 5kg

Women – 3kg



The guidelines in this chart assume the load is:

- Easily grasped with both hands
- Handled less than 30 times per hour
- Not supported for any length of time
- Handled by 'average' men and women
- The operation takes place in reasonable working conditions
- The lifter is in a stable body position
- There is no twisting or pushing or pulling

### Modified guideline figures

<b>Special Factor</b>	<b>Reduce guideline weight by:</b>
<i>Operation repeated once or twice per minute</i>	30%
<i>Operation repeated five to eight times per minute</i>	50%
<i>Operation repeated more than twelve times per minute</i>	80%
<i>Handler twists through 45 degrees</i>	10%
<i>Handler twists through 90 degrees</i>	20%