

PURPOSE

In the delivery of direct care and support to people with disabilities, it is not possible to eliminate hazardous manual handling however, it is the responsibility of all parties involved (staff, families, caregivers and participants as applicable) to control any apparent risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy provides for the following:

- Identification of potential risks to which employees may be exposed during their manual handling duties.
- Implementation of appropriate procedures to minimise manual handling of work-related incidents, injuries, or illness.
- The delivery of specific training programs to educate employees regarding best practice standards for manual handling for individual participants.
- Investigation and documentation of work-related manual handling incidents and the associated impact on staff and participants to minimise future risks.
- Clarification of accountability and responsibility in relation to the provision of manual handling supports.

SCOPE

Manual handling covers a wide range of physical activity. It includes lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, lowering, holding or supporting a person or object.

- Hazardous manual handling is defined as tasks that involve:
- repetitive or sustained application of force;
- repetitive or sustained awkward posture;
- repetitive or sustained movement;
- application of high force;
- handling of people or animals;
- handling loads that are unstable, unbalanced or difficult to hold.

POLICY

All About Care Australia (AACCA) is committed to ensuring that all employees are properly educated and adequately resourced so as to minimise the risk of illness, incident or accidental injury related to manual handling at work. This commitment is integral to promoting good occupational health and safety practices consistent with legislative requirements.

PROCEDURE

The following procedures are to be implemented:

- Ensure that the organisation meets its policy objective of ensuring that all employees are properly educated and adequately resourced so as to minimise the risk of illness, incident, accident or injury related to manual handling at work.
- Provide AACCA staff with information about, and training in, manual handling practices, appropriate to their duties. Training aligns with Work-Safe guides provided for the Disability and Community Service Sector and training delivered by accredited trainers in Manual Handling and online training platforms.

- Provide training, which assists employees to –
- Learn how to identify hazardous manual handling;
 - Understand the risks involved in hazardous manual handling and the need to use control measures;
 - Use appropriate manual handling techniques; and
 - Use equipment correctly and safely.
- Training may be provided through a range of mediums including face-to-face, online, via correspondence, peer training (shadow shifts) or a combination of face-to-face and online.
- Ensure Managers and staff -
 - Promote a culture of awareness to identify manual handling hazards, assess the risks, develop solutions or redesign tasks to eliminate or reduce risk.
 - Encourage discussion amongst employees regarding manual handling tasks they find difficult.
 - Report any hazard or manual handling risks, including unauthorised requests from families to undertake manual handling tasks to participants based on their preferences rather than to Worksafe standards
 - Respond promptly to address identified risks. Consult with employees, participants, carers, and possibly other service providers to develop effective and consistent manual handling risk controls.
 - Review injury records and incident reports to identify risks and ensure appropriate action has been taken to reduce/eliminate the risk.
- Take all reasonable steps to determine and document the appropriate manual handling method for all relevant participants with specific manual handling needs.
- Ensure AACCA staff can access the equipment necessary to provide safe manual handling practices.
- Request participants/families to maintain and service their lifting equipment and mobility aids ensuring the safe use of hoists, wheelchairs etc.
- Promptly investigate, remedy and document any AACCA employee incident or grievance regarding any manual handling issue.

See the appendix for specific manual handling procedures.

Assisting People in Wheelchairs: A Health and Safety Solution

The top section of the slide features a yellow background with a black and yellow diagonal hazard stripe pattern at the very top. Below this, the text "A Health and Safety Solution" is written in black. To the right is the WorkSafe BC logo, which consists of the words "WorkSafe" in white on a black rectangular background, followed by a white diamond shape containing the letters "BC" in black. Below the logo, the title "Assisting people in wheelchairs" is written in large, bold, white sans-serif font.

- Develop procedures to identify the safest movement of the wheelchair and client.
- Provide workers with training in the use of wheelchairs including:
 - going up and down curbs, controlling on slopes, managing small lips of ramps, turning
 - practical supervised training exercises at a range of community locations (cafes, train stations, cinema)
 - information provided by manufacturer and/or supplier if available.

A Health and Safety Solution

Environment

- Assess floor surfaces for minimal friction to assist ease of movement. Where necessary, modify existing flooring.
- Provide adequate space to manoeuvre (eg appropriate door widths).
- Develop and implement a system so if changes are made to the home or environment, the organisation providing the support is notified (eg installation or removal of a portable ramp, home renovation).
- Conduct a pre-visit assessment of accessibility before engaging in community-based activities.
- Avoid sand, loose stone or dirt paths when using indoor wheelchairs.

The problem



Pushing wheelchairs over steep, uneven or soft surfaces can put the worker at risk of injury to the back, neck and shoulders.

A solution



Outdoors, avoid sand, loose dirt, dirt paths when using indoor wheelchairs. Indoors, avoid thick pile carpet and rugs and line with soft underlay.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free 1800 136 089

Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

- Moving and supporting people with a disability
- Supporting people with personal hygiene care
- Handling wheelchairs in and out of vehicles
- Occupational violence
- Moving/lifting objects
- Vacuuming
- Mopping
- Cleaning bathrooms
- Making beds
- Work related driving: Transporting people and moving equipment

Related publications

- Department of Human Services, Accommodation standards and design guidelines – Shared supported accommodation, 2004
 - Victorian home care industry occupational health and safety guide, 2005
- Available from
worksafe.vic.gov.au and health.vic.gov.au

Australian Standards

- AS/NZS 3856:1998, Hoists and ramps for people with disabilities – Vehicle-mounted – Product requirements
- AS/NZS 2640:1994, Portable ramps for vehicles
- AS3693 – Wheelchairs—Nomenclature, terms and definitions
- AS3695 – Wheelchairs—Product requirements
- AS3696 – Wheelchairs
- ISO 10542-1:2001, Technical systems and aids for disabled or handicapped persons – Wheelchair tie down and occupant – restraint systems

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

- Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2003-027>

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/act-2011-018>

- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0240>

- Manual tasks involving the handling of people, Code of Practice 2001

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/21525/manual-tasks-people-handling-cop-2001.pdf

- A guide to working safely in people's homes

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/22233/community-working-safely-in-peoples-homes.pdf

- Hazardous manual tasks: Code of Practice 2021

https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/72632/hazardous-manual-tasks-cop-2021.pdf

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Participant Assessment & Support Plan
- Incident Register
- Accident Incident Hazard Report Form
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure