

Safer manual handling for roofers

Lifting, carrying or putting down objects in the wrong way can cause injury.

Roofers are a high-risk group for these injuries, called musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

These tips can help your employees work safely on site.

10 tips for manual handling



- 1. Plan ahead**
Create a plan for the job to avoid double handling of materials and awkward access points. Where you can, deliver sheets onto roof via crane. This avoids manually lifting onto the roof.



- 2. Identify manual handling tasks**
Identify manual handling tasks early. Think about the best way to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury before starting these tasks.



- 3. Choose smarter tools and materials**
Choose lightweight and ergonomic tools and materials. Lighten your tool belt as much as possible. Use tool extensions where you can to keep you more upright and to help you mix up positions.



- 4. Mix up your tasks**
Try alternating tasks throughout the day to mix up physical positions. Try and swap between being on the roof and being on the ground during the day.



- 5. Get work up off the ground**
Use a raised surface or portable bench for tasks where you can. Choose a storage method that will minimise manual handling. For example, higher dunnage and trestles.



- 6. Limit overhead work**
Avoid working with your arms above your head if you can. Use ladders, work platforms and scaffolding to get your body closer to your work. This is particularly important when lifting roof sheets.



- 7. Don't overload your shoulders**
Try to limit the number of components carried at one time. Split a heavy load into two or more.



- 8. Take breaks and stretch**
Regularly rest, stretch and straighten up if you're working in awkward positions.



- 9. Use equipment and mechanical aids**
Use equipment and mechanical aids, like lifting devices, where you can. Powered cutting tools can help reduce using manual snips.



- 10. Review and revise control strategies**
Keep talking about manual handling risks and what you have to do to eliminate or reduce them. If an injury occurs, review and revise your control measures. This will help prevent it happening again.



More information about manual handling

worksafe.vic.gov.au/hazardous-manual-handling



worksafe.vic.gov.au/construction

