

Safer manual handling for scaffolders

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

Scaffolders 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. Deliver materials and place stillages as close as possible to where they will be used.



- 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 by only carrying the tools you'll need to use.



- 4. Mix up your tasks**
Try alternating tasks throughout the day to mix up physical positions if you can. Try to avoid being in awkward positions for too long. Job rotation throughout the day can help with this.



- 5. Get work up off the ground**
Use a raised surface or built scaffolding for tasks where you can. Store gear off the ground to avoid bending over. Store materials where it's accessible and easy to pass. Choose a storage method that will minimise manual handling. For example, higher dunnage and trestles.



- 6. Don't overload your shoulders**
Try and limit the number of components you carry at one time. Split a heavy load into two or more trips.



- 7. Use a trolley**
Use a trolley to move materials around site instead of carrying them. Use trolleys and carts to move pallets close to where scaffolding will be erected.



- 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. Rely on cranes or gin wheel systems where suitable to avoid manual lifting.



- 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



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