Occupational Health and Safety topic for the month of September

MANUAL HANDLING

What is Manual Handling?
Manual handling is the movement of load using bodily force by an individual or a team. It is a common process carried out at work or at home and includes lifting, pushing, pulling and/or carrying of load.

How does Manual Handling Result to Injury?
Manual Handling requires force to be exerted by a person to move loads. The movement of loads using force causes a person to sprain and strain his/her muscles. These sprain and strain to the muscles in turn can wear and tear, and damage joints and ligaments, muscles and inveterbral discs resulting in Muscular Skeletal Disorders (MSDs). MSDs are injuries and conditions that can cause pain to the back, joints and limbs. These injuries can be ACUTE (occurs suddenly as a result of slip or jerk with immediate symptoms) or CHRONIC (occurs overtime from repetitive movements, i.e., twisting, stretching, reaching).

Manual Handling Risks
A number of factors can increase the risk of injury including:
- Size, shape and weight
- Sudden unexpected or jarring movements
- Awkward movements
- Static postures
- Personal factors (age, previous injuries)

How to Deal with Manual Handling Risks in Workplace
TILE – Tile is an acronym that aims to help you carry out manual handling risk assessment and prompts you to consider each essential area of activity in order to help you improve your health and safety.

T – TASK	I – INDIVIDUAL	L – LOAD	E – ENVIRONMENT
Do you need to…? • Bend? • Change your grip? • Reach above your shoulders? • Reach below your knees? • Use stairs? • Travel with load for a distance? • Are there any time constraints?	This means you make the assessment on what you are comfortable with lifting. Factors which may impact could be your age, mobility, old injuries and training received. No one can tell you your lifting capabilities. If you've assessed too heavy, ask for help.	You need to consider… • What's being lifted/moved • Where is it moved/lifted to? • How big or heavy it is • Its shape • Weather conditions • Surroundings	Hazards • Do you have to reach over obstacles? • Is it wet of dry? • Are there uneven surfaces to carry across?

How to Carry Out a Safe Lift
Before you begin the lift, ensure you have followed this process

Assess
Using T.I.L.E ensures you don't exceed your limits

Nudge
If the item moves when you nudge with either your foot or hand, then generally speaking, you'll be able to lift it

Aids or Help
Prepare your lifting aid and ask for someone to help you (Team Lifts)

Feet
Wide asymmetric stance, hip-width apart

Knees
Bend your knees, not beyond 90%, keeping heels on the ground

During the lift, ensure you have followed this process:

Hip & Back
Consider the posture of a weightlifter. Keep back straight, movement comes from your hip, power comes from your legs

Neck & Head
Relaxed position and maintain good position. Avoid stooping and making sure you have an awareness of your surroundings

Grip
Comfortable grip using your whole hand. Fingers open and touching the item

Load
Keep the load close to you at all times. This helps to reduce the effects of overstretching.

Pushing or Pulling
- Do not overload the trolley
- Stay close to the load and keep control over its movement
- Get a good grip
- Watch out for any obstructions along the way
- Keep the strain off your back by letting your legs take the strain
- Pushing is always better than puling

These actions as described help prevent injuries and ill health, but you can't prevent all MSDs. Therefore, you are encouraged to take these actions during manual handling to minimize your risk for Muscular Skeletal Disorders.

Should you encounter any signs and symptoms of MSDs, you must report them at an early stage before they become more serious. This helps you seek professional advice and medical assistance to help you reduce the risk.

Report all OH&S Hazards including accidents and near misses to OHS on ohs@nac.com.pg

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