Policy Directive

Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks) and Ergonomics Policy

Document No: SLHD_PD2014_004

Functional Sub-Group: Clinical Governance

Summary: Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) is committed to achieving and maintaining the best possible standard of work, health, safety for all its workers and others at SLHD workplaces.

SLHD will achieve this by eliminating hazards and adopting a pro-active risk management approach to identify, assess, control and review manual handling and ergonomic hazards in the workplace to comply with NSW Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and NSW Ministry of Health policy directives.

Manual handling is recognised as a significant workplace hazard. It is a frequent cause of injury and workers compensation claims in SLHD.

Approved by: Director, Clinical Governance and Risk, SLHD

Consultation: Consultation with workers and managers occur via the SLHD Work Health & Safety and Manual Handling Coordinators, Facility General Managers and Service Directors.

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Note: Sydney Local Health District* (SLHD) was established on 1 July 2011 following amendments to the Health Services Act 1997 which included renaming the former Sydney Local Health Network (SLHN). The former SLHN was established 1 January 2011, with the dissolution of the former Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS).
Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks) and Ergonomics Policy

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Endorsed by: Director, Clinical Governance and Risk, SLHD

Appendix 1: Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks) and Ergonomics Policy - Summary
Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks) Policy

1. Introduction

(i) The Risks Addressed by this Policy

Manual Handling and ergonomic risks

(ii) The Aims / Expected Outcome of this Policy

To improve workplace safety by better management of hazardous manual tasks and ergonomic risks in the workplace.

2. Policy Statement

Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) is committed to achieving and maintaining the best possible standard of work, health, safety for all its workers and others at SLHD workplaces.

SLHD will achieve this by eliminating hazards and adopting a pro-active risk management approach to identify, assess, control and review manual handling and ergonomic hazards in the workplace to comply with NSW Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and NSW Ministry of Health policy directives.

Manual handling is recognised as a significant workplace hazard. It is a frequent cause of injury and workers compensation claims in SLHD.

3. Principles / Guidelines

3.1 SLHD Executive and Senior Management

SLHD Executive and Senior Management have responsibility and accountability for ensuring the implementation of a Manual Handling and Ergonomics Program to meet the objectives of NSW WHS legislation 2011 and NSW Ministry of Health policy directives.

This includes:
- development and implementation of policies and procedures based on a risk management approach
- providing information, instruction and training to workers and managers
- allocation of appropriate resources
- evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the program
- reporting outcomes.

3.2 Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors in all areas will be accountable to the SLHD Executive for
- Compliance with relevant legislation, Codes of Practice, NSW Ministry of Health and SLHD Policies
- Improvements in manual handling and ergonomic performance by reducing injury severity and costs, and compliance with risk management principles.
- Eliminating Manual Handling and Ergonomic risks immediately. If unable to do this then implementing the risk management process to:
  - Identify, prioritise and register all hazardous manual tasks.
Assess and document manual handling risks using the Manual Handling Risk Management form or Keyboard Workstation Risk Assessment form, as relevant, in consultation with the relevant workers.

Control manual handling tasks based on the measures of the WHS hierarchy of control.

Review and monitor outcomes.

- Consulting with workers regarding the control measures and changes in the work environment.
- Ensuring safe work practices (SWPs) are developed, documented, implemented and reviewed as necessary.
- Providing manual handling equipment and ensure it is used and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Providing manual handling and ergonomic task specific training to workers to ensure they are competent to undertake tasks safely.
- Supervising workers to ensure tasks are performed in accordance with SWPs.
- Minimising risks when planning changes to the working environment or tasks and equipment purchases.
- Investigating all manual handling and ergonomic incidents to determine causative factors and implement preventative actions.
- Maintaining the knowledge skills required to assist workers by attendance at relevant training and development programs or seeking expert advice from others.
- Ensuring appropriate manual handling and ergonomic program documentation is maintained.
- Managing breaches of the manual handling and ergonomic policy by following performance management procedures.

### 3.3 Workers (including Employees, Contractors, VMOs, Students, Agency Staff, Volunteers etc)

Workers must take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and others in the work place. They must:

- Follow manual handling and ergonomic SWPs including using equipment provided and taking scheduled rest breaks.
- Report manual handling and ergonomic hazards, incidents, near misses or problems promptly to their manager/supervisor.
- Participate in risk management of hazardous manual handling tasks
- Consult and co-operate with managers and supervisors about manual handling and ergonomic risks
- Attend manual handling and ergonomic training as required to achieve competency in performing tasks involving manual handling.

### 3.4 Patients and Visitors

Visitors, clients and patients at SLHD have work health and safety (WHS) responsibilities and must:

- comply with any reasonable work health and safety instructions at SLHD facilities
- take reasonable care to not put themselves or others at risk.
- comply with SLHD health and safety standards.
4. Procedures

In consultation with workers, managers must identify and document manual handling and ergonomic related tasks in the department/ward.

Are any of these tasks hazardous?

- NO
  - If no, monitor to ensure nothing changes

- YES
  - If yes – can you eliminate the risk?
    - YES
      - if yes then eliminate it
    - NO
      - If no, complete a manual handling or a keyboard workstation risk assessment as relevant (available under ‘forms’ on the intranet or from your WHS or manual handling manager) and implement control measures to reduce the risk following the hierarchy of hazard.

Review and monitor risk assessments on a systematic basis e.g. at a minimum of 3 years. A review should also occur:
- when the control measure is no longer effective
- before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
- if a new hazard or risk is identified
- if the results of consultation indicate that a review is necessary
- if a health and safety representative at the workplace requests a review.

If manual handling or ergonomic tasks are identified as being hazardous develop control measures following the WHS hierarchy of controls.

When a SWP (or Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) is required train workers to follow the SWP and carry out the task safely.

Ensure manual handling equipment is maintained as recommended by the manufacturer and checked for safety regularly through a preventative maintenance program. Ensure equipment is entered on the asset register.

When purchasing new equipment ensure there is a trial of the equipment in the workplace. Follow the procedures in the Supply manual and use the WHS purchasing checklist to assess WHS risks.

When workplace changes are planned ensure that manual handling and ergonomic issues are identified and addressed based on a risk management approach.

Computer workstations should be assessed using the Keyboard Workstation Ergonomic Assessment Checklist.

Consultation with workers throughout all these activities is paramount.
5. Performance Measures

1. All workers are trained in manual handling theory (once off) and in practical manual handling skills every two years (as a minimum).
2. All hazardous manual tasks are eliminated or controlled with risk assessments in place as needed.
3. Ergonomic assessments of keyboard workstations performed at induction of new workers (who use these workstations) and when changes to the workstation are planned and made.
4. Reduction in the severity of manual handling related incidents.
5. Reduction in body stressing workers compensation claims.
6. Preventative maintenance schedules are met.

6. Definitions

**Hazardous Manual Task**, as defined in the WHS Regulations, means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:
- repetitive or sustained force
- high or sudden force
- repetitive movement
- sustained or awkward posture
- exposure to vibration.

**Ergonomics** is “the study of work systems or activities in which people, machines, equipment and the environment interact”. Ergonomics involves consideration of the variability in human capability and an understanding of how people interact with the work environment, tools and equipment.

7. Consultation

Consultation with workers and managers occur via the SLHD Work Health & Safety and Manual Handling Coordinators, Facility General Managers and Service Directors.

8. References and links

- NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- NSW Ministry of Health PD2013_050 Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures
Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks) and Ergonomics Policy 2013 - Summary

SLHD is committed to providing a safe work environment for all workers, patients, visitors and others to effectively manage manual handling and ergonomic risks in the workplace and meeting relevant legislative compliance.

**Hazardous Manual Task**, as defined in the WHS Regulations, means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following: repetitive or sustained force, high or sudden force, repetitive movement, sustained or awkward posture, exposure to vibration.

**Ergonomics** involves consideration of the variability in human capability and an understanding of how people interact with the work environment, tools and equipment.

### WHS Responsibilities

<table>
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<th>Workers - Includes employees, volunteers, contractor and students</th>
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Visitors, clients and patients at SLHD

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