

# SLHD Policy Directive

<b>Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) and Ergonomic Policy</b>	
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# Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) and Ergonomic Policy

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## Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) and Ergonomic Policy

### 1. Introduction

Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) has a strong commitment and a systematic approach to managing Work Health and Safety (WHS). This approach is integrated into our wider management systems. We have implemented processes for the management of health and safety risks in the workplace to prevent injuries and illnesses and also for managing workplace incidents, injuries or illnesses, when they occur.

Hazardous Manual Tasks (HMT) are recognised as a significant workplace hazard. They are a frequent cause of injury and workers compensation claims in SLHD and across Health.

This Policy is in line with SLHD's Strategic Goal:

- For our Staff to work in safe, respectful, healthy and productive workplaces.

### 2. The Aims / Expected Outcome of this Policy

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

### 3. Risk Statement

SLHD Enterprise Risk Management System (ERMS) Risk # 34 – Work health safety strategies not effective. This policy is also linked with SLHD Enterprise Risk Management System (ERMS) Risk # 10 – Problems Associated with Bariatric Patient Management.

Comprehensive management of HMT and ergonomic risks, in consultation with workers, is essential to improve safety and prevent injuries to both workers and patients.

### 4. Policy Statement

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 HMT and ergonomic hazards in the workplace to comply with NSW WHS legislation and NSW Health policy directives.

### 5. Scope

This policy applies to all workers carrying out work for the SLHD.

### 6. Resources

The SLHD [WHS website](#) contains resources to assist with the management of HMT and ergonomic hazards. Also see links and tools in [Section 13](#).

### 7. Implementation

- All facilities and services are to ensure that risks associated with HMT and ergonomics are identified and eliminated where possible, or if not, control strategies are implemented following the WHS hierarchy of control.
- WHS and Manual Handling managers support the implementation of this policy.
- Implementation of this policy is monitored by the SLHD Work Health and Safety, Manual Handling and Injury Management Committee.

- Compliance with this policy is audited through the Ministry of Health WHS Audit tool, conducted every two years.

## **8. Key Performance Indicators and Service Measures**

- All workers are trained in manual handling theory (once off) and competency assessed in practical manual handling tasks before performing a HMT (100%).
- All hazardous manual tasks are eliminated or controlled with risk assessments in place as needed.
- 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.
- Reduction in the severity of HMT related incidents.
- Reduction in body stressing workers compensation claims.
- Preventative maintenance schedules are met.

## **9. Responsibilities**

### **9.1 SLHD Executive and Senior Management**

SLHD Executive and Senior Management have responsibility and accountability for ensuring the implementation of a HMT and Ergonomics Program to meet the objectives of NSW WHS legislation 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.

### **9.2 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 to HMT and ergonomic performance by reducing injury severity and costs, and compliance with risk management principles.
- Eliminating HMT and Ergonomic risks immediately. If unable to do this then implementing the risk management process to:
  - Identify, prioritise and register all HMT;
  - Assess and document manual handling risks using the HMT 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.

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- Consulting with workers regarding the control measures and changes in the work environment.
  - Providing assistive technology/equipment and ensure it is used and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.
  - Using assistive technology/equipment as a first choice measure to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury.
  - Ensuring safe work practices (SWPs) are developed, documented, implemented and reviewed as necessary.
  - Providing HMT and ergonomic task specific training to workers to ensure they are competent to undertake tasks safely.
  - Supervising workers to ensure tasks are performed safely in accordance with SWPs.
  - Assessing and minimising risks when planning changes to the working environment or tasks and new equipment purchases.
  - Investigating all HMT and ergonomic incidents to determine causative factors and implement preventative actions in a timely manner.
  - Ensuring appropriate HMT and ergonomic program documentation is maintained.
  - Managing breaches of the HMT and ergonomic policy by following performance management procedures.
  - Displaying the policy summary (Appendix 1) in the workplace e.g. on a WHS noticeboard.

### **9.3 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. This includes reducing the risk of injury when performing HMT by:

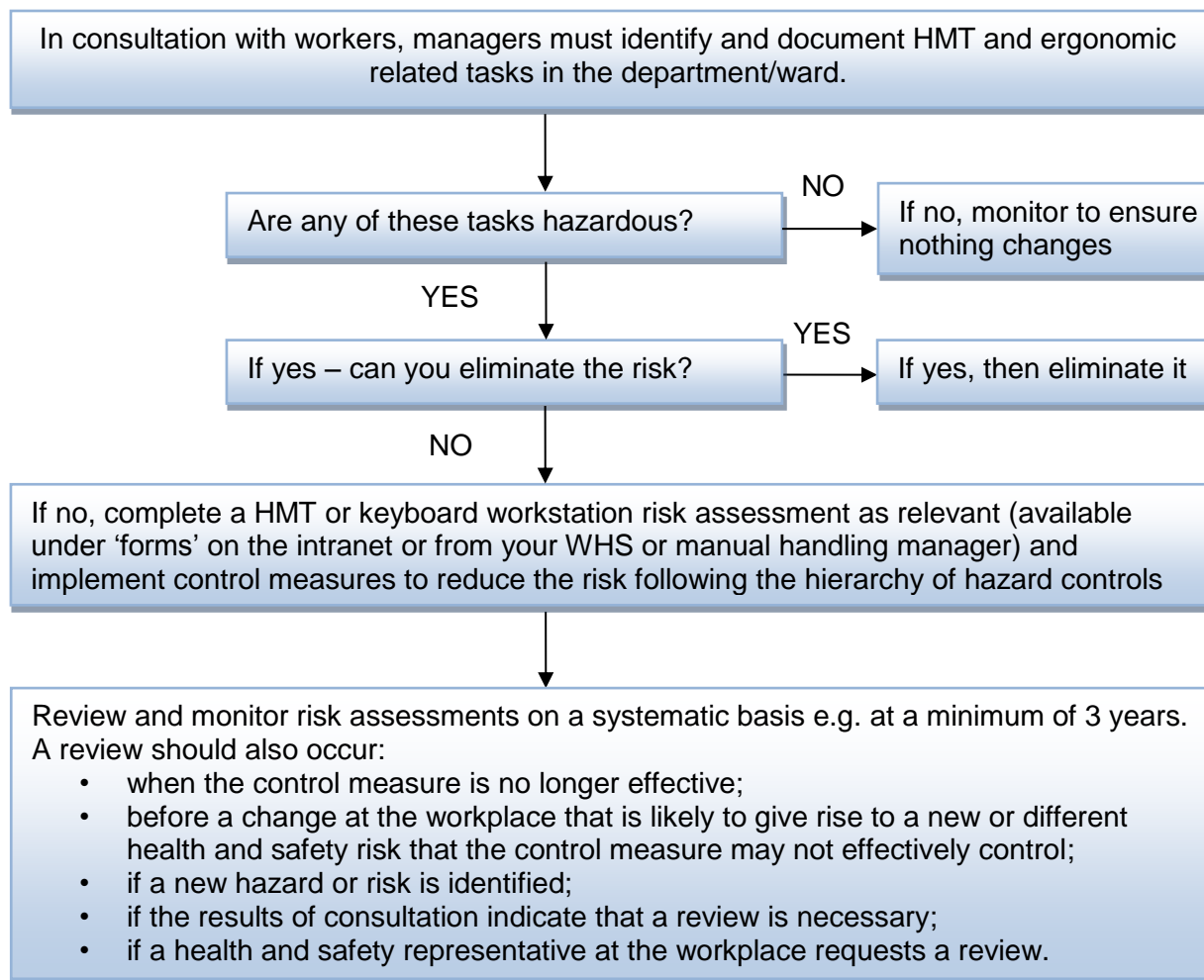
- Follow SWPs including using assistive technology/equipment provided and taking scheduled rest breaks.
- Report HMT and ergonomic hazards, incidents, near misses or problems promptly to their manager/supervisor.
- Participate in risk management of HMT tasks.
- Participate in consultation and cooperate with managers and supervisors to reduce HMT and ergonomic risks.
- Attend HMT and ergonomic training as required to achieve competency in performing manual handling tasks.

### **9.4 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.

## 10. Procedures



When a SWP is required, train workers and ensure they are competent to carry out the task safely.

Ensure assistive technology/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 purchasing procedures 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.***

## 11. Definitions

<b>Hazardous Manual Task</b>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repetitive or sustained force;</li> <li>• high or sudden force;</li> <li>• repetitive movement;</li> <li>• sustained or awkward posture;</li> <li>• exposure to vibration.</li> </ul> <p>These hazards directly stress the body and can lead to an injury.</p>
<b>Ergonomics</b>	<p>“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.</p>
<b>Workstation design</b>	<p>Workstations should be designed to allow workers to work in an upright position, shoulders in a neutral position, not elevated, and upper arms close to the trunk most of the time without large reaches to perform the task. Work surfaces should be easily adjustable to suit a range of workers and the tasks they perform. Where it is not possible to provide adjustable workstations consider altering the design so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the workstation height suits the widest range of physical characteristics of workers;</li> <li>• reaching distances suit shorter workers; and,</li> <li>• knee and leg clearances suit larger workers.</li> </ul>
<b>Office workstations</b>	<p>The core components of an office workstation are a desk, a chair and equipment to perform office tasks. The workstation should be designed to suit the range of workers who may use it, the types of tasks performed and the types of equipment used by the workers. It should be flexible, large enough to accommodate the range of tasks performed and easily adjustable. The adjustment mechanisms (if in place) should not create a hazardous manual task.</p>
<b>Workers</b>	<p>A ‘worker’ includes any person who carries out work for SLHD. ‘Worker’ includes any person who works as an: employee, trainee, volunteer, outworker, apprentice, work experience student, contractor or sub-contractor, employees of a contractor or sub-contractor, employee of a labour hire company assigned to work for SLHD.</p>

## 12. Consultation

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

### 13. Links and tools

The SLHD [WHS website](#) contains resources to assist with the management of HMT and ergonomic hazards.

- SLHD [Hazardous Manual Tasks Risk Management Form](#) - to assist with identifying, assessing and controlling the risks related to hazardous manual tasks
- SLHD [Workstation Risk assessment](#) and [SLHD Workstation Risk Assessment guideline](#) - to assist with appropriate set up of workstations and ongoing assessment of risks associated with computer workstation use.

#### SafeWork Resources

- [Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Musculoskeletal disorder strategy 2017-2022](#)
- [SafeWork NSW Manual Tasks resource page](#)

#### Training

##### Mandatory Training

All staff are required to complete manual handling theory training online at orientation and a practical manual handling competency assessment training every two years. This can be through the facility/service WHS or Manual Handling manager or your department Manual Handling Assessor/s.

Staff must also be trained in the use and handling of any equipment before they use it.

Online training can be completed through the [My Health Learning LMS](#).

Course Name	Target Group	Delivery	Course Code	Once off or recurring
Hazardous Manual Tasks	All staff	Online	39962652	Once off
Manual Handling Practical Skills Assessment - patient handling	All patient handlers	Face to face	45796888	Two yearly
Manual Handling Practical Skills Assessment - object handling	All object handlers	Face to face	48883405	Two yearly
Manual Handling Workplace Assessor (also known as Manual Handling Train the Trainer)	Staff nominated as department manual handling assessors/trainers	Face to face	45796305	Once off
Manual Handling Assessor Refresher Training	Current Manual Handling Assessors	Face to face	91144511	Locally determined



## Other Training

Below are other online courses that may be relevant to your staff.

Course Name	Target Group	Delivery	Course Code	Once off or recurring
Manual Handling Legislation & Policies (Online)	All staff	Online	43888861	Locally determined
Manual Handling Videos	All staff	Online	43889175	Locally determined
Safe Patient Handling	Nursing, medical, allied health, clinical managers, porters and wards persons	Online	107466425	Locally determined

## 14. References

[NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

[NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

[Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice](#), October 2018, SafeWork Australia

NSW MoH [PD2018\\_013 - Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures](#)

## 15. National Safety and Quality Standard/s, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed



Clinical Governance Standard

**HAZARDOUS MANUAL TASKS and ERGONOMICS POLICY 2019 - SUMMARY**

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

**Hazardous Manual Task (HMT)** 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. (NSW Work Health Safety [WHS] Regulation)

**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**

<b>Workers – incl. employees, volunteers, contractors, students</b>	<b>Managers/ Supervisors - will be accountable to the SLHD Executive for:</b>	<b>SLHD Executive and Senior Management</b>
<p>Must take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and others in the work place. This includes reducing the risk of injury when performing HMT by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow safe work practices (SWPs) including using assistive technology/equipment provided and taking scheduled rest breaks.</li> <li>• Report HMT and ergonomic hazards, incidents, near misses or problems promptly to their manager/supervisor.</li> <li>• Participate in risk management of HMT tasks.</li> <li>• Participate in consultation and cooperate with managers and supervisors to reduce HMT and ergonomic risks.</li> <li>• Attend HMT and ergonomic training as required to achieve competency in performing manual handling tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation, Codes of Practice, NSW MoH and SLHD Policies.</li> <li>• Improvements to HMT and ergonomic performance by reducing injury severity and costs, and compliance with risk management principles.</li> <li>• Eliminating HMT and Ergonomic risks immediately. If unable to do this, then implementing the risk management process to:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify, prioritise and register all HMT.</li> <li>○ Assess and document manual handling risks using the HMT Risk Management form or Keyboard Workstation Risk Assessment form, as relevant, in consultation with the relevant workers.</li> <li>○ Control manual handling tasks based on the measures of the WHS hierarchy of control.</li> <li>○ Review and monitor outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consulting with workers regarding the control measures and changes in the work environment.</li> <li>• Providing assistive technology/equipment and ensure it is used and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.</li> <li>• Using assistive technology/equipment as a first choice measure to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury.</li> <li>• Ensuring SWPs are developed, documented, implemented and reviewed as necessary.</li> <li>• Providing HMT and ergonomic task specific training to workers to ensure they are competent to undertake tasks safely.</li> <li>• Supervising workers to ensure tasks are performed safely in accordance with SWPs.</li> <li>• Assessing and minimising risks when planning changes to the working environment or tasks and new equipment purchases.</li> <li>• Investigating all HMT and ergonomic incidents to determine causative factors and implement preventative actions in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Ensuring appropriate HMT and ergonomic program documentation is maintained.</li> <li>• Managing breaches of the HMT and ergonomics policy by following performance management procedures.</li> <li>• Displaying this policy summary in the workplace e.g. on a WHS noticeboard.</li> </ul>	<p>Have responsibility and accountability for ensuring the implementation of a HMT and Ergonomics Program to meet the objectives of NSW WHS legislation and NSW MoH policy directives. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development and implementation of policies and procedures based on a risk management approach;</li> <li>• providing information, instruction and training to workers and managers;</li> <li>• allocation of appropriate resources;</li> <li>• evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the program;</li> <li>• reporting outcomes.</li> </ul>

**Visitors, clients and patients at SLHD**

Visitors, clients and patients at SLHD have WHS responsibilities and must: comply with any reasonable WHS instructions at SLHD facilities; take reasonable care to not put themselves or others at risk; and, comply with SLHD health and safety standards.