

# Swim England Safety Guidance

## Manual Handling for the sport of swimming

This guidance is for professionals and volunteers working in the swimming industry and in particular Swim England/ASA affiliated swimming clubs and is aimed at safe guarding competitive swimmers, swimmers under instruction, teachers and coaches and club officials

### Introduction

Manual Handling can be defined as:

*"The transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force."*

### Health and Safety Manual Handling Guidelines

Detailed guidance is provided in the HSE Guidance on the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (ISBN 0 7176 2415-3). This Guidance includes guidance on safe lifting limits and lifting, lowering, carrying, twisting, pushing, pulling and lifting while seated.

In brief, the manual handling checklist need only be used for a task where a significant hazard is believed to be present. It need not be used for every manual handling task.

Typical manual handling tasks in leisure include: lifting machinery or heavy sports equipment, moving chemical drums, foodstuffs or beer barrels and general items as part of the goods received process.

Specific to swimming pools and club use:

- The handling of pool covers particularly those that have no motor drive.
  - The pulling of lane ropes along the length of the swimming pool.
  - Lifting and lowering springboards onto their mountings.
  - Carrying starting platforms
  - Carrying and fitting timing pads and turning boards
  - Moving strength and conditioning equipment i.e. mats
  - Disability hoists
  - Moving easy walk-in steps
  - Moving and fixing water polo goals
  - Lifting team members in synchronised swimming
- (this is not a definitive list)*

Many of the manual handling tasks can be assessed by simple observation.

Manual handling is not just an application related to the weight of an object and the following issues need to be considered:

1. **Task – Does it involve any of the following:-**
2. Is the load held away from the torso of the body?

3. Twisting of the torso of the body?
4. Stooping?
5. Excessive reaching distances?
6. Large vertical movement?
7. Excessive vertical movement?
8. Excessive pushing or pulling of the load?
9. Unpredictable movement of loads?
10. Repetitive handling?
11. Insufficient rest or recovery periods?
12. A high work rate imposed by the process?
13. Muscles that are infrequently used or held in a static position?
14. Frequent or prolonged physical effort?
15. Team handling?
16. Handling while seated?

Additional Comments/notes:

**17. Load – is the load:-**

18. Heavy?
19. Bulky?
20. Difficult to grasp?
21. Unstable/unpredictable, are the contents likely to shift?
22. Sharp, hot, rough or otherwise potentially harmful?
23. Additional Comments/Notes: e.g. It was noted that there was a mat trolley to assist movement

**24. Working Environment – are there:-**

25. Space constraints preventing good position?
26. Uneven, slippery or unstable floors?
27. Variations in floor levels or work surface?
28. Extreme temperatures or humid conditions?
29. Strong air movements?
30. Poor lighting conditions?
31. Additional Comments/Notes:

**32. Individual Capability – does the operation/task:-**

33. Require unusual strength or height etc?
34. Is the operative trained to perform the task?
35. Create a hazard to those who have a health problem?
36. Create a hazard to those who are pregnant?
37. Require special protective equipment for its safe performance?
38. Require special knowledge, information or training for its safe performance?
39. Is movement or position hindered or restricted by clothing or personal protective equipment?
40. Additional Comments/Notes:

The usual caveat applies to swimming pools; this operation is invariably the responsibility of the pool operator however it is necessary for the swimming club to ensure that its members are not placed at undue risk by the lack of a proper risk assessment by the pool operator and therefore must question why club members are tasked with manual handling operations in the swimming pool environment. Is it right and if it is, is the club taking the proper precautions.

## Simple overview and guide to following the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

(N.B. an alternative checklist is contained in the HSE Guidance on the Regulations).

### Nature of the operation

- (1) *Do the regulations apply? Does the operation/task involve a manual handling operation?*  
YES/NO  
If the answer is 'No' then do not ask any further questions. End of assessment.
- (2) *Is there a significant risk of injury? YES/NO*  
If the answer is 'No' then do not ask any further questions. End of assessment.
- (3) *Is it reasonably practicable to avoid moving the load(s)? YES/NO*  
If the answer is 'Yes' then do not ask any further questions. End of assessment.
- (4) *Is it reasonably practicable to automate or mechanise the operation/task so that no risk of manual handling remains? YES/NO*  
If the answer is 'Yes' then do not ask any further questions. End of assessment.
- (5) *Carry out manual handling assessment, using the risk assessment checklist.*
- (6) *Determine measures to reduce manual handling risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable.*
- (7) *Implement any necessary control measures.*
- (8) *Is the risk of injury through manual handling now sufficiently reduced to a reasonable level? YES/NO*  
If the answer is 'Yes' then do not ask any further questions.  
If the answer is 'No' repeat stages 6, 7 and 8 again.
- (9) *Set review date (this should automatically be carried out if operating conditions significantly change).*