

Manual Handling Policy

Introduction

Safe manual handling is a vitally important area of concern for Malvern Special Families. This Manual Handling Policy is part of a continuing programme for providing safety information to Malvern Special Families staff.

The policy of MSF with respect to manual handling is to ensure all persons are involved in safe lifting procedures in order to prevent the risk of back injury. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, visitors, and members of the public who are on the MSF premises at any time.

The information given in this policy is general and does not substitute for training given to meet specific situations e.g. hoist training. This policy has been developed for the staff handbook, and will be reviewed and updated when necessary.

Responsibilities

All staff members have a statutory responsibility to ensure their own safety in relation to manual handling and to undertake the manual handling training when provided.

You can reduce the risk of accident and injury by:

- Not lifting loads that are too heavy.
- Not bending forward for long periods.
- Not twisting the trunk unduly.
- Not using sudden movements.
- Being aware of good posture, fitness & flexibility.
- Following the safe principles of manual handling.

Remember the 8 key points:

- 1) Assess the area and the load.
- 2) Broad, stable base.
- 3) Bend the knees.
- 4) Back straight.
- 5) Firm grip.
- 6) Arms in line with the trunk.
- 7) Weight close to the centre of gravity.
- 8) Turn feet in the direction of movement.

Assess the task, the area, the load and your capability

Is it too heavy? If you are unsure, move the load forward and sideways. Get help from another person or use a mechanical aid. Ensure you have a clear path and always wear suitable clothing. Check that there is nothing protruding from the load e.g. splinters, and that the load is stable and safe to lift.

Broad, stable base:

Take a comfortable stance with the feet hip width apart, facing in the direction you are going, and as close to the load as possible.

Bend the knees:

Bend the knees to keep the centre of gravity within the base. Use the dynamic thigh muscles for lifting and not the weak postural muscles of the lower back.

Back straight:

This doesn't mean having an upright back. It shouldn't be bent, as this places uneven strain on the discs, but you can bend at the hips. Bent knees and straight back mean the central point of gravity remains over the weight, reducing strain. Never twist your back when lifting. Use your feet to change direction.

Firm Grip:

Use the palm of the hand and the roots of the fingers rather than the fingertips. A diagonal hold is best. Place one hand under the object, the other hand at the top of the opposite side. With smaller loads, both hands can be placed under the load.

Arms in line with the trunk:

Keeping your arms close to the sides of the body reduces tension in the arms and shoulders. This, along with the broad base of the feet, gives stability.

Weight close to the centre of gravity:

Keep the load as close to the trunk as possible. You should be balanced and stable yet be able to use your body weight to get the load moving easily. This is why it is important to wear the correct clothing, as holding a dirty load away from you will place unnecessary strain on your back.

Turn feet in direction of movement:

When ready to lift, use your legs for the lift. This requires less force and counter balances the load. Lift using a smooth action.

Managing Different Types of Loads

Lifting a load from the floor

Adopt a comfortable stance. Keep the back straight – but not upright – and bend the knees. Keep the arms inside the thighs; grip the load with one hand at an outer corner and the other on the lower opposite corner. Lift smoothly.

Lifting from low to high

Lifting anything from low to high should be done in two stages. Firstly, lift the object from the ground to an intermediate height and secondly lift from intermediate to high. If available, use a mechanical aid such as steps or platforms. The same principles apply when lifting from a height.

Lifting on to a table or bench –

Specific to Malvern Special Families personal care for children and youths in our care

When lifting on to a table or bench, use your knees to lower the load while keeping it close to the body.

Handling children with special educational needs

Safe methods are needed to assist children to move and the use of appropriate equipment is needed for those with physical difficulties e.g. hoist. This is the “lift” in concern when changing our service users who are in nappies/pads and cannot place themselves on the treatment couch. There must always be 2 members of staff present. A hoist is to be used when necessary and can only be operated by trained staff.

To achieve the required results with minimal effort/ risk by the handler and minimal discomfort to the child/youth:

- The maneuver must be planned taking the child/ youth’s weight, environment and procedure into consideration.
- Manual Handling may continue provided that it does not involve lifting most or all of child/youth’s weight on your own.
- The correct maneuvering techniques should be applied by using the principals of proper body mechanics and thus avoid potential/ actual hazards.

Handler(s) must

- Ensure his/ her nails are short.
- Remove wristwatch and jewelry, which are potentially hazardous.
- Wear appropriate footwear, i.e. low heels with non-slip soles.
- Ensure to position and lock the treatment couch/ wheelchair prior to any handling manoeuver.
- Wear gloves and wash hands every time.
- Have the required number of staff/ handlers for the manoeuver.
- Use lifting aids e.g. hoist, overhead lifting pole, when applicable.

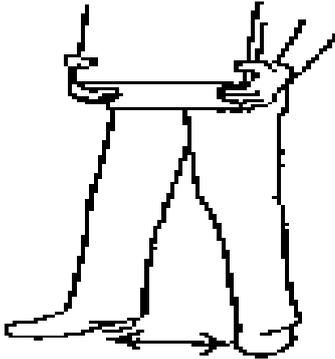
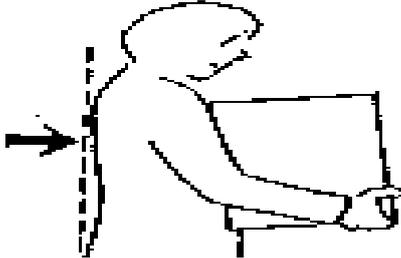
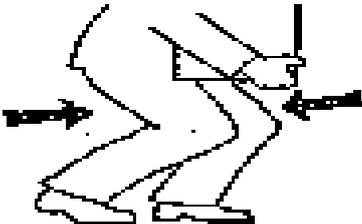
Before using a hoist, check the following:

- Safe working load / date of last inspection and service, signs of wear and tear, breaks working
- Sling retention clips or loops intact and working
- Spreader bar firmly attached to lifting mechanism and legs open and close correctly
- Brakes, emergency stop and lowering device working
- Battery charged, no fluid leakage from hydraulics

LIFTING PROCEDURE: CHILD ONTO TREATMENT COUCH

Staff Action	Rationale
Check the child's information sheet at the beginning of the day for details on toileting.	To obtain specific instruction and/ or information.
Talk calmly to the child throughout	To allay fears and gain child's confidence and cooperation.
Wash and dry hands. Wear gloves and apron.	To prevent cross-contamination.
Ensure child's privacy.	To avoid unnecessary embarrassment and to and maintain dignity.
Think and plan before beginning the handling manoeuvre.	To gain confidence and safety.
All handlers must know the procedure to be followed and move together on an agreed signal; with the leader counting "1,2,3" and then perform the manoeuvre. Lifting in unison. Make sure every one knows what to do in advance, and moves at the same time. Also, make sure every one knows who the leader is, and listen to and follows his/ her commands. Avoid sudden jerky manoeuvres.	To insure synchronisation between the handlers. To ensure child's weight is divided equally between the handlers.

Staff Action	Rationale
Stand close to the child/ wheel chair, by keeping the load within, or near as possible to handler base of support.	To ensure that the movement is going to be as safe, effective and efficient as possible.
Have a wide base of support (having feet apart) and bend the knees (lowering the centre of gravity).	For the balancing, stability and minimising the risk of straining the back muscles during the handling.
Maintain correct alignment of the back by appropriately positioning the wheel chair. Place the leading foot pointed in the direction of the move. Never twist or turn the back during handling procedure – always turn with the feet.	To allow minimal turning while transferring, and avoid back injuries caused by flexion and rotation of the spine.
Flex at the hips and knees and use leg muscles in the manoeuvre.	Leg muscles are stronger for bearing any weight during the procedure.
Select the area to be held carefully. DO NOT GRIP WITH FINGERTIPS, OR DRAG CHILD ON THE TREATMENT COUCH.	To promote child's comfort, and prevent pressure areas.
Brace the abdomen prior to the manoeuvre.	This provides extra support for the spine.
Use a smooth action for the movement. Utilise body weight and momentum where possible.	Jerky, quick movements increase the risks of back injury and are uncomfortable for the child.
Reassure and observe the child while carrying out the manoeuvre.	To make sure that the manoeuvre was comfortable for the handler/ child and to note any points for improvement.
Ensure that the child is left in a safe and comfortable position.	To promote comfort

Staff Action	Rationale
<p>Position your self.</p> <p>Keep your feet apart. Widening your base lowers your centre of gravity making you more balanced and stable</p>	
<p>Maintain correct alignment of the back.</p> <p>Holding the load as close as possible will cut down on the stress exerted on your arms and back</p>	
<p>Use your legs muscles</p> <p>Flex at the hips and knees. Leg muscles are stronger for bearing any weight during the manoeuvre.</p>	
<p>Don't twist or bend</p> <p>Never twist or turn your back during the manoeuvre, moving your feet instead of your upper body can help balance the load and minimise the strain in your back and abdominal muscles.</p>	