

Manual Handling Guidelines

An Excerpt from the Health & Safety Authority "Safe Manual Handling" Guidelines.



What is the Law?

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007.

The legal obligations are set out in:

- Section 6(2) (e) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.
- Regulation 27 and 28 and the Eighth and Ninth Schedules to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007.
- Regulation 8 of the General Application Regulations requires employers to designate a competent employee or engage a competent person to assist them in safety and health protection. This includes training.

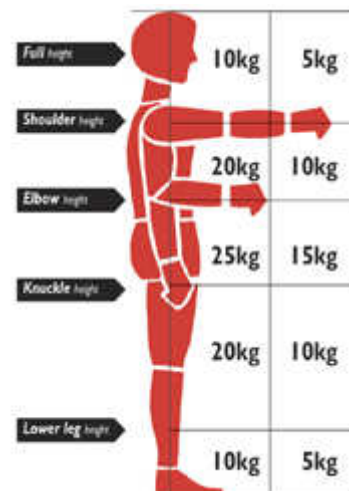
What are the Maximum Weights to be Lifted?

There are no longer any absolute weight limits – for the simple reason that there are too many other factors involved – these risk factors have already been covered.

Guideline Weights:

Key risk factors are:

- Excessive fatigue.
- Bad posture – cramped, restricted areas.
- Heavy loads.
- Repetitive bending or twisting.
- Frequent lifting.



However, this diagram indicates guideline weights for lifting and lowering for an adult male (fit and healthy) in the best working conditions. For a female all weights should be reduced by one third.

Twisting

If a lifting task includes twisting there is a considerable increase in the chance of injury.

Frequent Lifting or Lowering

These guideline weights assume up to 30 leisurely operations an hour – where the pace of work is not forced, there are adequate pauses to rest and the load is not held for any length of time.

The weights must be reduced if the operation is repeated more frequently

- By 30% if repeated once or twice per minute.
- By 50% if repeated five to eight times per minute.
- By 80% if repeated more than twelve times per minute.

Tackling the Problem

Employers have to seriously look for ways of eliminating manual handling in all cases.

Provision of Mechanical Aids

Wherever practical they must be provided – they can be as simple as a sack trolley. Any necessary training in their use must be provided.