Tool Box Talk

Manual Handling

Introduction

In the UK, 54 million working days are lost each year because of pain, strain and injuries to the back. Back strains are a common injury too. These can be caused by using poor techniques to move materials such as twisting and turning while lifting, carrying or digging.

Vennsys has had 9 recorded manual handling events that have resulted in individuals being hurt on the contract since April 2011. Of these, 3 have resulted in the person spending over 3 days off work.

Stop and think before lifting/handling

Notify your Line Manager of any medical condition that could affect your ability to handle loads, e.g. illness, pregnancy or existing injury.

Do Not

Attempt to lift more than you can easily manage. Do not continue the task if you feel pain/discomfort. Tell your Line Manager, Supervisor/Team Leader.

How to lift safely

Plan the lift
- Gently rock the load to test the weight and its distribution.
- Check whether you need to move it at all, use lifting aids if they're available
- Reduce the weight of the load if possible
- Where is the load going?
- Do you need help?
- Are there obstructions in the way?
- Is there somewhere to set it down?
- Are you wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Adopt a stable position
- Feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground).
- Be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain stability.
Manual Handling

Bend your knees not your back
- Keep your back straight
- Grip the load with your palms, rather than just your fingers. Keep your arms close to your body to help support the load.

Lifting Manoeuvre
- Lift smoothly avoiding jerking movements
- Bend your knees
- Lift your head first – the back then straightens automatically
- Use your leg muscles to lift the load – not your back
- If you feel excessive strain, slowly lower the load and seek help.

Keep the load close to the waist
- Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body.
- If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.

Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways
- Shoulders should be kept level and facing the same direction as the hips.
- Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.

Tool box talk questions
How can you get injured while lifting and carrying?
How can you protect yourself from injury?