

**NIPEC/19/03**  
(replacing NIPEC/14/21)



NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION  
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

# Moving and Handling Guidance

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended in 2002, apply to a wide range of moving and handling activities, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying.
- 1.2 Moving and handling can be described as ‘the transporting or supporting of a load by one or more members of staff, which includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving, and by reason of its characteristics of unfavourable ergonomic conditions, involves risk, particularly of back injuries to staff’.
- 1.3 Whilst the final level of responsibility for health and safety rests with each individual employee, this document outlines specific responsibilities for managers and staff in respect of moving and handling activity.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 contains practical advice on measures to reduce the risk of injury and general guidance for assessing risk while lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling, and handling furniture and heavy loads. Staff can also refer to guidance given in ‘Your Guide to Lifting Safely’, a copy of which can be obtained from the Corporate Services Manager.

## 2. Manager’s responsibilities

- 2.1 The regulations require employers to:
  - **Avoid** the need for hazardous moving and handling activities as far as practicable
  - **Assess** the risk of injury from any moving and handling that can’t be avoided
  - **Reduce** the risk of injury from moving and handling as far as practicable.
- 2.2 Managers should ensure:
  - staff understand and receive a copy of this moving and handling guidance, which can also be easily accessed within the workplace
  - staff are appropriately and adequately trained to undertake the tasks of the post
  - there are safe systems of work established for staff to follow and that available aids and equipment are properly utilised
  - all appropriate equipment is provided; safely stored; maintained according to manufacturer’s instructions; well labelled; and easily accessible to staff involved in moving and handling
  - staff consistently use good practices when involved in moving and handling, by monitoring the working systems, sickness absence and accidents within their work areas
  - accurate details of any accident, incident or dangerous occurrences involving moving and handling are recorded promptly, in order to reduce the risk of injury to other members of staff and visitors. For details of the procedures to be followed when reporting accidents, see NIPEC’s Reporting of Adverse Incidents, Accidents, Near Misses and Dangerous Occurrences (NIPEC/18/16)
  - First Aid treatment is sought immediately for any injuries sustained by staff and the relevant information recorded, together with any subsequent medical treatment received by the individual concerned.

### **3. Individual's responsibilities**

#### 3.1 Individual members of staff should:

- participate in appropriate training programme and implement training provided
- ensure that they follow safe systems of work and have knowledge of how to lift and carry loads in a safe manner, using appropriate equipment, machinery and aids and in accordance with training and instruction provided. Staff should at all times use their common sense, always bearing in mind that the majority of injuries are caused by lifting and carrying loads that are too heavy for them, or are too difficult for one person to carry comfortably on their own
- adhere to the advice and appropriate procedures as laid out in the NIPEC's Health and Safety Policy (NIPEC/18/04) and employ good handling techniques as described and illustrated in Appendix 1
- inform their line manager of any hazardous handling activity, so to ensure that their activities do not place, either themselves or others at risk
- inform their line manager about any physical / medical condition which might affect their ability to undertake moving and handling tasks
- report accidents and dangerous occurrences to their manager as soon as possible and to complete the accident book as appropriate.

### **4.5. Conclusion**

- 4.1 This document outlines the responsibilities of individuals and line managers in terms of moving and handling activities. This does not negate the principle that health and safety is the responsibility of each individual employee.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 contains practical advice on measures to reduce the risk of injury and general guidance for assessing risk while lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling, and handling furniture and heavy loads. All staff should refer to and take cognisance of these guidance when planning and/or undertaking any moving and handling activity.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidance on Moving and Handling Activities

### 1. Reduce the risks

- Ensure environment is free of hazards and obstructions.
- Clear instructions and communication are vital when undertaking a moving and handling activity.
- Lifting aids should always be used when undertaking a manual handling exercise.

### 2. Be Sensible

- Staff should take account of their physical condition prior to undertaking any moving and handling activity.
- No staff member should feel under any obligation to participate in any moving and handling activity if they feel unable to play a fully active role.
- Any member of staff who feels they are unable to carry out any such an activity should inform their line manager.
- **No employee should undertake any lifting in any circumstances from the first point at which they consider or know they are pregnant or within 3 months of a normal delivery.**

### 3. Helpful hints

- Assess the load and if in doubt, **GET HELP**.
- Ensure that you are physically capable of lifting the load.
- Ensure the load is not too bulky or difficult to grasp.
- Ensure the load is not likely to shift or move once lifted.
- Watch out for sharp edges.



### 4. Guidance on moving and handling techniques

Here are some important points, using a basic lifting technique.

#### Stop and think

- Plan the lift.
- Where is the load to be placed?
- Use appropriate handling aids where possible.
- Do you need help with the load?
- Remove obstructions.
- For a long lift, such as floor to shoulder height, consider resting the load mid-way on a table or bench to change grip.



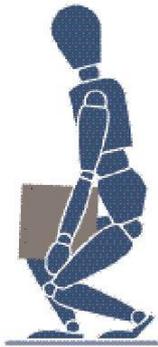


### Position the feet

- Feet apart, giving a balanced and stable base for lifting.
- Leading leg as far forward as is comfortable and if possible, pointing in the direction you intend to go.

### Adopt a good posture

- When lifting from a low level, bend the knees, but do not kneel or over flex the knees.
- Keep the back straight, maintaining its natural curve (tucking in the chin helps).
- Lean forward a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.
- Keep the shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.



### Get a firm grip

- Try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs.
- The best position and type of grip depends on the circumstances and individual preference; but must be secure.
- A hook grip is less tiring than keeping the fingers straight.
- If you need to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do it as smoothly as possible.

### Keep close to the load

- Keep the load close to the trunk for as long as possible.
- Keep heaviest side of the load next to the trunk.
- If a close approach to the load is not possible, slide it towards you before trying to lift.

### Don't Jerk

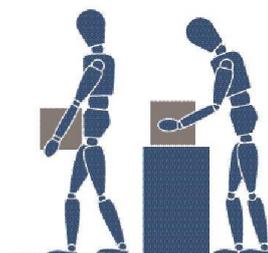
- Lift smoothly, raising the chin as the lift begins.
- Keep control of the load.

### Move the feet

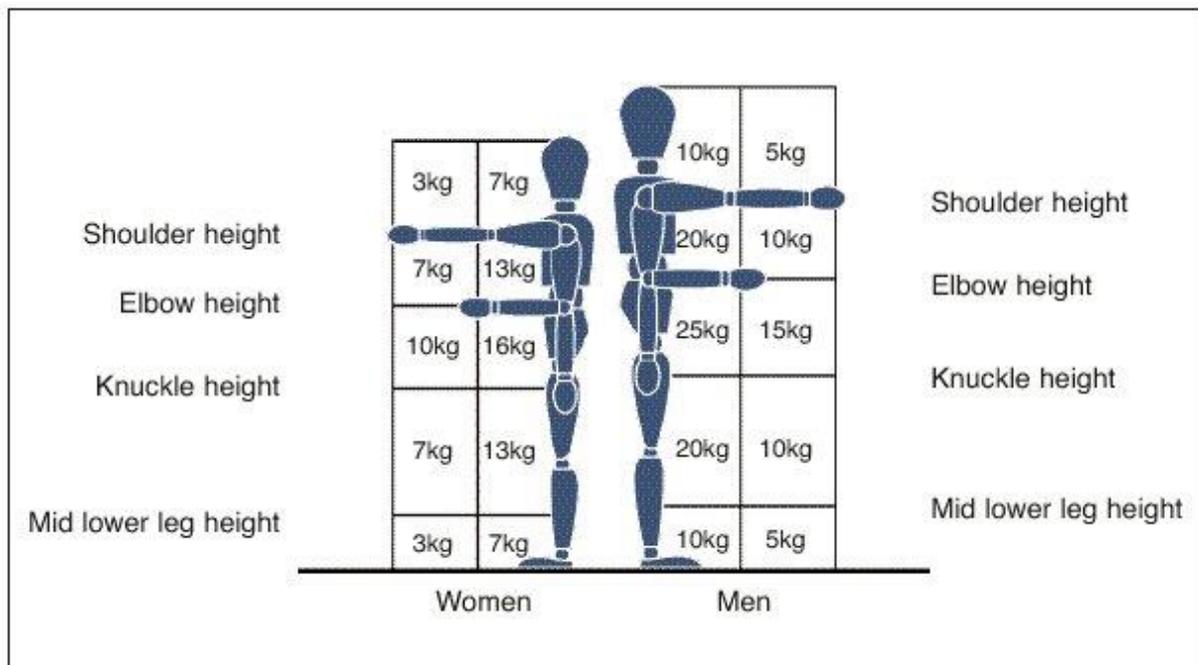
- Don't twist the trunk when turning to the side.

### Put down, then adjust

- If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.



## 5. General risk assessment guidelines



- Each box in the diagram above shows guideline weights for lifting and lowering.
- Observe the activity and compare to the diagram. If the lifter's hands enter more than one box during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between boxes. If the operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes, make a more detailed assessment.
- The weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands.
- The operation takes place in reasonable working conditions with the lifter in a stable body position.
- Any operation involving more than twice the guideline weights should be rigorously assessed, even for very fit, well-trained individuals working under favourable conditions.
- There is no such thing as a completely 'safe' manual handling operation. But working within the guidelines will cut the risk and reduce the need for a more detailed assessment.
- Reduce the guideline weights if the lifter twists to the side during the operation. As a rough guide, reduce them by 10% if the handler twists beyond 45° and by 20% if the handler twists beyond 90°.

### Frequent lifting and lowering

- The guideline weights are for infrequent operations – up to about 30 operations per hour.

- Where the pace of work is not forced, adequate pauses to rest or use different muscles are possible, and the load is not supported for any length of time.
- Reduce the weights if the operation is repeated more often. As a rough guide, reduce the weights by 30% if the operation is repeated once or twice a minute, by 50% where the operation is repeated five to eight times a minute; and by 80% where the operation is repeated more than 12 times a minute.

## 6. Improve your flexibility

Strengthen the muscles, which support your spine by keeping active and physically fit. Try these stretches and strengthening exercises as part of your daily routine.

When doing these exercises do not hold your breath, breathe normally.

### a. Stretch your Back

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart with your hands in the small of your back.
- Look straight ahead and push your hips forward and arch your back.
- Hold and repeat five times.

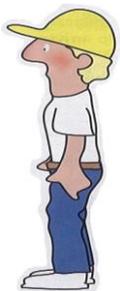


### b. Shoulder Shrug

- Stand or sit with your arms by your sides and your head up.
- Shrug your shoulders as close to your ears as possible.
- Hold and repeat five times.

### c. Stretch your Lower Back

- Lie on your back, pull in your stomach muscles, bend your knees, tuck your hands behind your knees and pull gently towards you.
- Hold and repeat five times.



### d. Muscle Control

- Pull your stomach in as far as possible.
- Hold for five seconds and repeat.
- Strong stomach muscles will support your spine.

### e. Wall slide

- Stand with your back against the wall legs slightly apart.
- Holding in your stomach and buttocks, press your lower back against the wall.
- Moving your feet out slightly, slide your back down the wall until you are in a half sitting position.
- Hold, slowly slide up and repeat.



**f. Rotation**

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, with your feet on the floor.
- Pull in your stomach muscles and roll your knees slowly to one side then over to the other side.
- Repeat five times.

