

Manual Handling Policy and Procedure

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all manual handling practices at SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd promote safety, dignity, and wellbeing, while supporting participant choice, control, and independence.

Manual handling tasks such as lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, supporting, or carrying loads—are a routine part of many roles and can present risks of injury, particularly musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). This policy provides guidance to staff to ensure that all manual handling activities are carried out safely, respectfully, and in line with best practice standards, with participant involvement and consent wherever appropriate.

Manual handling practices must be trauma-informed, person-centred, and conducted in a way that upholds participant dignity while balancing duty of care with dignity of risk. All procedures are intended to minimise harm to both staff and participants through effective training, equipment use, and risk management strategies.

2.0 Scope

The policy applies to all staff involved in manual handling tasks at SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd.

2.1 Organisation

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is responsible for ensuring that:

- Manual handling practices reflect current evidence-based approaches
- Staff are informed, trained, and supported in the safe management of hazardous manual tasks
- Appropriate resources are allocated to eliminate or minimise risks associated with manual handling activities

2.2 Staff

All workers must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others
- Follow reasonable instructions, policies, and procedures provided by SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd to mitigate manual handling risks
- Participate in training and use manual handling equipment correctly
- Collaborate in identifying and reporting hazards or unsafe practices

3.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to ensuring that all manual handling tasks are carried out in a manner that safeguards the health, safety, and dignity of both participants and staff. Manual handling practices must be in accordance with the NDIS Practice Standards, NDIS Code of Conduct, and Safe Work Australia's Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice.

All manual handling:

- Will involve participant consultation and informed consent
- Must respect participant dignity, promote autonomy, and uphold trauma-informed practice
- Will be conducted only by personnel with a current NDIS Worker Screening clearance

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- Identify and assess foreseeable manual handling hazards
- Eliminate or minimise risks as far as reasonably practicable through control measures such as mechanical aids, staff training, and procedural guidance
- Ensure ongoing review and monitoring of control measures to maintain a safe work environment

Risk Management and Training

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- Provide staff with appropriate equipment and practical training on safe manual handling
- Deliver annual manual handling education to maintain current staff competencies
- Provide comprehensive induction training tailored to work roles and associated risks
- Monitor and review manual handling practices, especially for those delivering direct support

Participant-Specific Measures

- Assess each participant for manual handling risks during initial and routine reviews
- Document manual handling risks and control strategies in participant records
- Reassess manual handling procedures when a participant's condition or environment changes

Incident Management

- Investigate all manual handling incidents or injuries
- Review and revise risk assessments and work practices as needed
- Complete and submit Incident Investigation Forms in a timely manner

Staff Responsibility

All staff involved in manual handling must:

- Understand and apply the principles of safe manual handling.
- Follow all organisational procedures and manufacturer instructions.
- Use safe work practices consistently and report any hazards immediately.

4.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Manual handling	Any activity involves lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining. It also includes sustained and awkward postures or repetitive movements.
Participant-specific manual handling	Handling activities designed to support participant needs, considering their physical, emotional, and psychological safety, and respecting their dignity and choices.
Hazardous manual task	A task requiring a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following: • repetitive or sustained force • a high or sudden force • repetitive movement • sustained or awkward posture • exposure to vibration These hazards directly stress the body and may lead to injury.
Dignity of risk	The concept of allowing participants to take reasonable risks to experience life fully, with support and safeguards to minimise harm.
Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)	An MSD may include the following: • sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons • back injuries, including damage to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, spinal discs, nerves, joints and bones • joint and bone injuries or degeneration, including injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, hands and feet

Term	Definition
	• nerve injuries or compression (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome) • muscular and vascular disorders as a result of hand-arm vibration • soft tissue injuries, including hernias • chronic pain • An MSD can occur in two ways including: • gradual wear and tear to joints, ligaments, muscles and intervertebral discs caused by repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions • sudden damage caused by strenuous activity or unexpected movements, such as when loads being handled move or change position suddenly • Injuries can also occur due to a combination of the above mechanisms
Workplace	Any place where work is carried out for a business and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work, including a participant's home.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Managing manual handling risks

All new staff undertake work health and safety training and are provided with relevant documentation at their induction/orientation. The Worker Orientation Checklist records this.

New staff will be assessed for their competency in manual handling on their initial buddy shift/s and any later shift observations.

All staff will be provided annual refresher training in manual handling relevant to their role, as per mandatory training outlined in the Staff Development Policy and Procedure.

5.2 Participant care procedures

Participant assessment, planning and ongoing revision will include:

- an initial assessment of manual handling risks and appropriate control strategies, documented in the Participant Initial Assessment Form
- notes of manual handling risks in the Risk Assessment Form

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- ongoing assessment of manual handling risks and strategies annually or as required

When assessing participant-specific manual handling risks, staff must review any relevant Participant Support Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, and allied health assessments to ensure strategies align with each participant's needs, rights, and risk profile.

Participants and/or their representatives will be consulted during manual handling assessments to ensure the chosen strategies respect their preferences, dignity, and safety.

Manual handling assessments and strategies will be reviewed immediately following any change in a participant's condition that may alter manual handling needs or risks.

Manual handling assessments and strategies will be formally reviewed:

- Annually as part of the participant's annual review
- Immediately after any incident, injury, or change in participant condition
- Whenever equipment is changed or updated
- As part of the participant's NDIS plan review or review of behaviour support strategies, where applicable

5.3 Continuous improvement procedures

The Quality and Risk Committee will:

- ensure all musculoskeletal injuries are investigated
- review policies and procedures in the light of such incidents
- enter review and outcomes in the Incident Register and Continuous Improvement Register
- periodically review all employee incidents to identify musculoskeletal injuries and manual handling patterns

All incidents, including those related to manual handling, will be reviewed under the NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018, and where applicable, reported to the NDIS Commission within required timeframes (e.g., 24 hours for serious incidents).

5.4 Employee procedures

Employees are expected to:

- take part in all training and assessment provided concerning manual handling
- adhere to manual handling policies and procedures
- consult with all key persons to reduce manual handling risks, i.e. participant, family, carer, management and allied health professionals
- use and operate equipment following manufacturer instructions and only for its intended use

- report to the Manager as soon as possible:
 - potential hazards and faulty equipment (e.g. commode chair difficult to manoeuvre, malfunctioning hoist batteries, frayed/worn slings, harnesses and broken buckles)
 - incident/accident, injury or dangerous occurrence relating to manual handling
 - changes in the participant's condition and environment may increase the risk of injury from manual handling issues

Staff are responsible for reporting any risks or changes to a participant's condition that could impact manual handling. Staff must ensure all manual handling is done with participant involvement and consent, respecting their right to dignity and choice.

Escalation of Unresolved Risks:

Where staff, participants, or their representatives identify manual handling risks that cannot be resolved internally, they may report concerns to:

- **NDIS Commission** (for participant safety risks or breaches of dignity of risk):
www.ndiscommission.gov.au or 1800 035 544
- **Safe Work Australia / State Workplace Health and Safety Regulator** (for workplace risks):

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will support any person wishing to report concerns externally and will provide guidance and information on this process if requested.

5.5 Risk management process for manual tasks

IDENTIFY	What is the manual task? Using the body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing.				CONSULT
	Is the manual task hazardous?				
	Application of force: - repetitive - sustained - high - sudden	Posture: - sustained - awkward	Movement: - repetitive	Exposure to vibration	
					
ASSESS	What is the risk of MSD? • How often and for how long are specific postures, movements or forces performed or held? • What is the duration of the task? • Does the task involve high or sudden force?				CONSULT

	Does the task involve vibration? What is the source of risk? <table><tr><td>Work area design and layout</td><td>Systems of work</td><td>Nature, size, weight and number of persons, animals or things handled</td><td>Work environment</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Work area design and layout	Systems of work	Nature, size, weight and number of persons, animals or things handled	Work environment					
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CONTROL	Is the task necessary? - Can the source of risk (work area layout, environment, etc.) be changed? - Can mechanical aids be used to perform the task? - What training is needed to support the control measures? 	CONSULT								
REVIEW	When to conduct a review: - when the control measure is no longer effective - before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control - if the new hazard or risk is identified - if consultation results indicate that a review is necessary - if a health and safety representative at the workplace requests a review	CONSULT								

6.0 Related documents

- Incident Report
- Incident Investigation Form
- Incident Investigation Form Final Report
- Incident Register
- Continuous Improvement Plan Register
- Worker Orientation Checklist
- Risk Assessment Form
- Risk Management Plan Register
- Hazard Report Form
- Staff Training Record
- Staff Training Plan
- Training Attendance Register – In-house
- Annual Organisational Training Register and Review
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure

7.0 References

- NDIS Code of Conduct (2018)
- NDIS Practice Standards
- NDIS (Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules 2018
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2019 (Commonwealth)
- SafeWork Australia - Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practices