# Sample Manual Materials Handling Policy

Policy manual: Policy Number:

Subject: Manual Materials Handling

Approved by: Date:

**Purpose:**

To ensure staff required to perform manual material handling tasks are provided with the training, equipment and safe work procedures to reduce the risk of injury in the workplace. In continuing care, staff in all departments will have manual materials handling training as a component of their job requirements.

**Definitions:**

Hazard: a situation, condition or thing that may be dangerous to the safety or health of workers.

Hazard assessment: functions, steps and criteria for the design and plan of work which identify hazards, provide measures to reduce the probability, severity and potential of injury, identify residual risks and provide alternative methods of hazard control.

Heavy or awkward load: an object that is difficult for an individual to move, which includes equipment, goods, supplies, persons and animals.

Hazard control: methods used to eliminate or control loss. There are three types of controls:

1. Engineering controls: the design of the physical environment and provision of equipment.
2. Administrative controls: direct people and include broad topics such as policies, procedures and training.
3. Personal protective equipment: any device or item of apparel worn to protect a worker.

Manual materials handling: any task that requires a person to manually move something from one point to another. This includes tasks where you use your muscle power to move things from one place to another with or without the aid of powered equipment.

Risk: The chance that a hazard will result in an accident with definable consequences during a period of activity.

**Procedures:**

1. Job descriptions prepared for each position will include an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the position as well as the physical demands, including the weight, frequency and duration employees will be required to perform manual materials handling tasks.
2. Hazard assessments will include the risks associated with manual materials handling and include a list of controls to be implemented by staff to reduce their risk of injury. In accordance with legislation these hazard assessments are to be prepared and reviewed with staff and updated with any changes to procedures or the addition of new work processes or equipment.
   1. Equipment will be provided for the handling of heavy or awkward loads. This equipment will be evaluated prior to implementation to ensure proper body mechanics, efficiency and ease of use.
   2. Regular and preventative maintenance will be scheduled to maintain equipment in good repair.
   3. Safe work procedures will be developed for all equipment and will outline the requirement for staff training prior to using the equipment, pre-start up checks of equipment for proper functioning and the duty to report any equipment malfunctions.
3. Manual materials handling training will occur for employees in all departments in general or departmental orientation and annually. Training will include the following components:
   1. Principles of safe lifting;
   2. Back care;
   3. Body mechanics;
   4. Environmental scan including a review of the load, the task, individual worker capabilities, and hazards within the environment.
   5. The signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury;
   6. Responsibility to report injuries early;
   7. Safe work procedures.
4. Responsibilities
5. Employer/Supervisor:
   * Complete hazard assessments for all manual materials handling tasks.
   * Provide employees with necessary equipment.
   * Train employees in safe work procedures on hire, annually and when deficiencies or needs are identified.
   * Complete an annual review on the effectiveness of the manual materials handling program at reducing workplace injuries.
   * Ensure employees adhere to policies and procedure expectations and intervene with disciplinary process when necessary.
6. Employees
   * Must utilize any equipment provided.
   * Follow all safe work procedures.
   * Attend all training session and demonstrate proficiency with all skills.
   * Check all equipment to ensure proper function and report any issues.
   * Identify and report any hazards that present a risk for completing work in a safe manner.
   * Early reporting of any signs or symptoms of work related musculoskeletal injuries.
7. Employees will be monitored for safe work practices .Supervisors are to provide direction to correct unsafe practices and failure to adhere to safe work practices may result in disciplinary action. Should issues be identified the disciplinary process will be executed until there is resolution of the matter.

**Outcomes**

Employees are provided with the training, equipment and safe work procedures for manual materials handling to reduce the risk of injury in the workplace.

**References**

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Code and Regulations 2009, Part 2 & 14

Continuing Care Safety Association, Hazard Assessment Course, 2009

Continuing Care Safety Association, Health and Safety Management Systems Course, 2009

Continuing Care Safety Association, Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program, 2010

Worksafe Alberta. Hazard Assessment & Control. employment.alberta.ca/whs/learning/hazards/Hazard.htm