WHS DOCUMENTS & TEMPLATES

DOC-HMA-TPL · Hazardous Manual Tasks Risk Assessment

Product Overview

For: Australian businesses with physical work: warehouses, workshops, health and community care, cleaning, retail, hospitality, offices and sites

Version 1.0 · 15 November 2026

A risk assessment for any manual task, built on the risk factors that cause musculoskeletal injuries (force, posture, movement, vibration, and how long and how often), and an Excel register of every manual task, rated on the same 5x5 matrix.

Describe the task and the load, tick the risk factors present and where in the task they happen, find where the risk comes from (the work area, the system of work, the load or the environment), rate the risk, and choose controls, most effective first, with examples for each level. The risk matrix, scales and rules for rating are on the last pages.

The Excel register lists every manual task with its risk factors, the current risk and the risk after further controls calculated from the matrix, Extreme and High risks in red and amber, overdue actions in red, and a worked example.

Written once for Australia, to the model WHS laws, in plain terms that also work in Victoria. The guide's state and territory notes show where the law differs, including the regulator to contact. Made by Orana Skills Centre.

What is included

Item	File
Excel hazardous manual tasks register: risk factors, current and residual risk from the matrix, overdue actions flagged, a worked example	02_TEMPLATE/Hazardous Manual Tasks Register.xlsx
Hazardous manual task risk assessment: the task, risk factors, sources of risk, rating, controls most effective first, with the risk matrix	02_TEMPLATE/Hazardous Manual Task Risk Assessment.docx and .pdf
How to Use This Template: how to complete and adapt it, the law in brief, state and territory notes, records and every placeholder	01_START_HERE/How to Use This Template.pdf
Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms and Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (PDF)

Who it is for

- Supervisors and WHS advisers who assess manual tasks with the workers who do them
- Businesses with sprains and strains in their injury records
- Return to work coordinators looking at the task behind an injury

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How to Use This Template

How to complete, adapt and keep the hazardous manual tasks risk assessment

1 What this template is for

Musculoskeletal injuries, such as sprains, strains and back injuries, are among the most common work injuries. They come from manual tasks that involve force, awkward or sustained postures, repeated movement or vibration, especially when the task is done for long periods or often. This assessment finds those risk factors in a task and fixes their source, so the task is safer for everyone who does it.

2 How to use it

Step	What to do
1	List the manual tasks in the register. Start with tasks linked to injuries or reports of pain, and tasks workers say are hard.
2	For each task likely to be hazardous, watch it being done and complete the Hazardous Manual Task Risk Assessment with the people who do it.
3	Tick the risk factors present, and find where they come from: the work area, the system of work, the load or the environment.
4	Rate the risk with the controls in place now, on the matrix at the end of the assessment.
5	Choose controls, most effective first: eliminate the handling, redesign the task, the load or the work area, or provide aids. Rotation, breaks and training support them; they do not replace them.
6	Let workers try the controls, and check they are used and work. Record the result in the register.
7	Review the task after an injury or a report of pain, when the task changes, and at least every year.

Make it work, not just exist

- Ask the workers which tasks hurt. Early reports of discomfort are the best warning you will get.
- If the aid is slower or harder to reach than doing the task by hand, it will not be used. Fix that first.

3 Who does what

Who	What they do
Supervisor or person in charge of the work	Leads the assessment with the workers and puts the controls in place
Workers and HSRs	Show how the task is really done, report pain and discomfort early, and try the controls
Manager	Approves and pays for the controls, and decides on any High or Extreme risk
Person who looks after WHS	Keeps the register, follows up actions, and looks at injury trends

4 The law, in brief

The WHS laws require a business to manage the risk of musculoskeletal disorders from hazardous manual tasks: to identify the tasks, and to eliminate the risks so far as is reasonably practicable or, if that is not possible, minimise them. In choosing controls, the business must consider the postures, movements, forces and vibration involved, how

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Hazardous Manual Task Risk Assessment

Assess one manual task: the risk factors, where they come from, the risk, and the controls, most effective first

Task		**Work area or site**	
Assessed by		**Workers and HSRs consulted**	
Date		**Review date**	

How to use it

- Watch the task being done by the people who do it, and talk to them. Look at the whole task, not only the lift.
- Part 1 describes the task. Part 2 asks which risk factors are present. Part 3 asks where they come from. Fix the source, not the worker.
- Rate the risk on the matrix (part 4), then choose controls, most effective first (part 5). Training in lifting technique alone is not an adequate control.
- Enter the task in the Excel register, and review the assessment after a change, a report of pain or injury, or at least every year.

1 The task

Question	Answer
What is done, step by step, and what equipment or aids are used?	
The load: what it is, its weight or the force needed, its size and shape, and how it is gripped	
How long is the task done for, and how often, in a shift? Are there breaks or changes of task?	
Who does it? How many workers, and are any new, returning from injury, or not used to it?	
Have there been reports of pain, discomfort, injuries or near misses from this task?	

2 Risk factors

Tick each risk factor present, and note where in the task it happens. The more risk factors, and the longer and more often, the higher the risk.

Is this present in the task?	Present?	Where in the task
Force		
Lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or holding a heavy load, or one that is hard to grip	☐ Yes ☐ No	

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Hazardous Manual Tasks Risk Assessment

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

This sample shows a few pages, so you can judge the layout and the quality. A risk assessment for any manual task, built on the risk factors that cause musculoskeletal injuries (force, posture, movement, vibration, and how long and how often), and an Excel register of every manual task, rated on the same 5x5 matrix.

What the full product contains

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Formats

- Word (.docx), editable, with your logo and business name in the header
- Excel (.xlsx), editable, with dropdowns and formulas (no macros)
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