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Manual handling risk assessment

Matchtech & Resourcing Solutions' worker safety briefings

November 2021

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST RAIL TALENT IN THE UK

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is the process of identifying what could harm people (Hazards), consider the likelihood (Risk) of someone getting hurt and balance the severity of any injury or damage with what needs the time, effort and costs needed to reduce the risk (Control measures) of it happening as much as possible.

The client onsite will have a risk assessment and Safe System of work documented for all tasks that you do.

In addition to this paperwork, you have a legal obligation to follow these procedures, and ensure the health and safety of yourself and other people who could be affected by what you do (including what you do not do, for example not locking an access gate.)

Once you get into the habit of consciously performing risk assessment as part of your job, it will become second nature and you will reduce the chances of getting an injury while at work.

Manual Handling Risk Assessment

Risk = Likelihood x Impact.

There are different techniques used to measure and score the variables when creating a risk assessment, one of the most common ways is to score the likelihood and consequence with a number between 1 and 3 and multiplying these two numbers together.

		Severity/Consequence		
		Slightly harmful (1)	Harmful (2)	Extremely harmful (3)
Likelihood	Highly unlikely (1)	Trivial risk (Score 1)	Tolerable risk (Score 2)	Moderate risk (Score 3)
	Unlikely (2)	Tolerable risk (Score 2)	Moderate risk (Score 4)	Substantial risk (Score 6)
	Likely (3)	Moderate risk (Score 3)	Substantial risk (Score 6)	Intolerable risk (Score 9)

Trivial	No action is required.
Tolerable	No additional controls are required. Monitoring is required to ensure control is maintained.
Moderate	Efforts are required to reduce risk. Controls are to be implemented within a specified time.
Substantial	New work not to start until risk reduced. If work is in progress, urgent action to be taken. Considerable resources may be required.
Intolerable	Work shall not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If reduction is not possible, the activity shall be prohibited.

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There are lots of potential hazards in the workplace, whether it is running trains, conductor rails, underfoot conditions etc...

Specifically for Manual handling tasks, there are a number of different hazards and variables to consider, but the following four subheadings will help you to remember the critical ones

T.I.L.E.

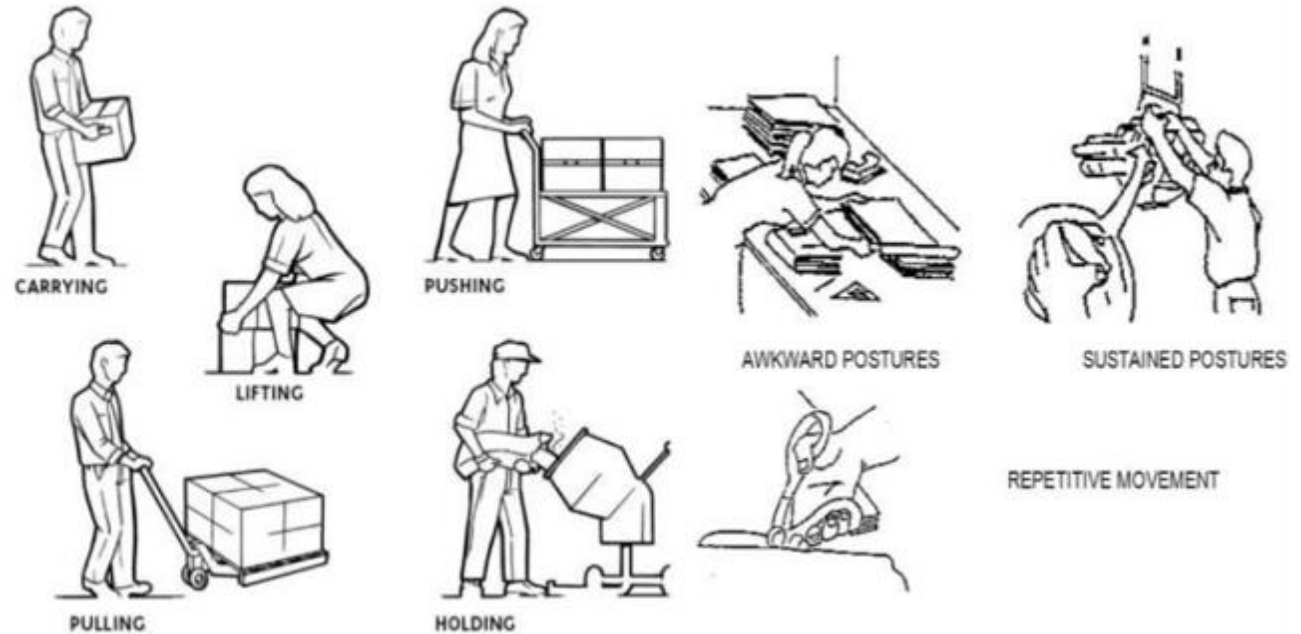
- **T**ask - What is the lift, can it be avoided completely
- **I**ndividual - Are you capable? Will it need to be a group lift.?
- **L**oad - What are you moving, is it long, sharp edges
- **E**nvironment - Is there sufficient lighting, firm even ground?

We will consider these 4 items in more detail

Task – What are you doing?

Consider:

- Posture
- Hold
- Twist
- Stooping
- Lifting/lowering
- Carrying distance
- Seated
- Prolonged repetition
- Teamwork



Individual – Are you all able?

Consider:

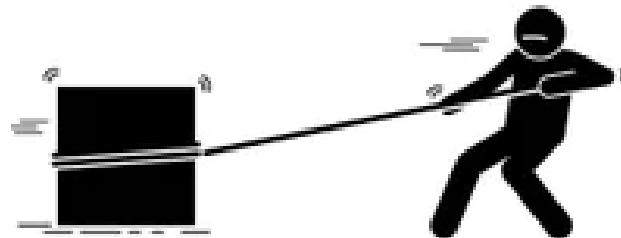
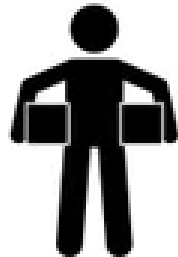
- Strength
- Height
- Disabilities
- Experienced
- Concentration span
- Sport injuries
- Group operation "1,2,3,lift."
- Communication among the group
- Pregnant women should never undertake lifting duties



Load – Are you all able?

Consider:

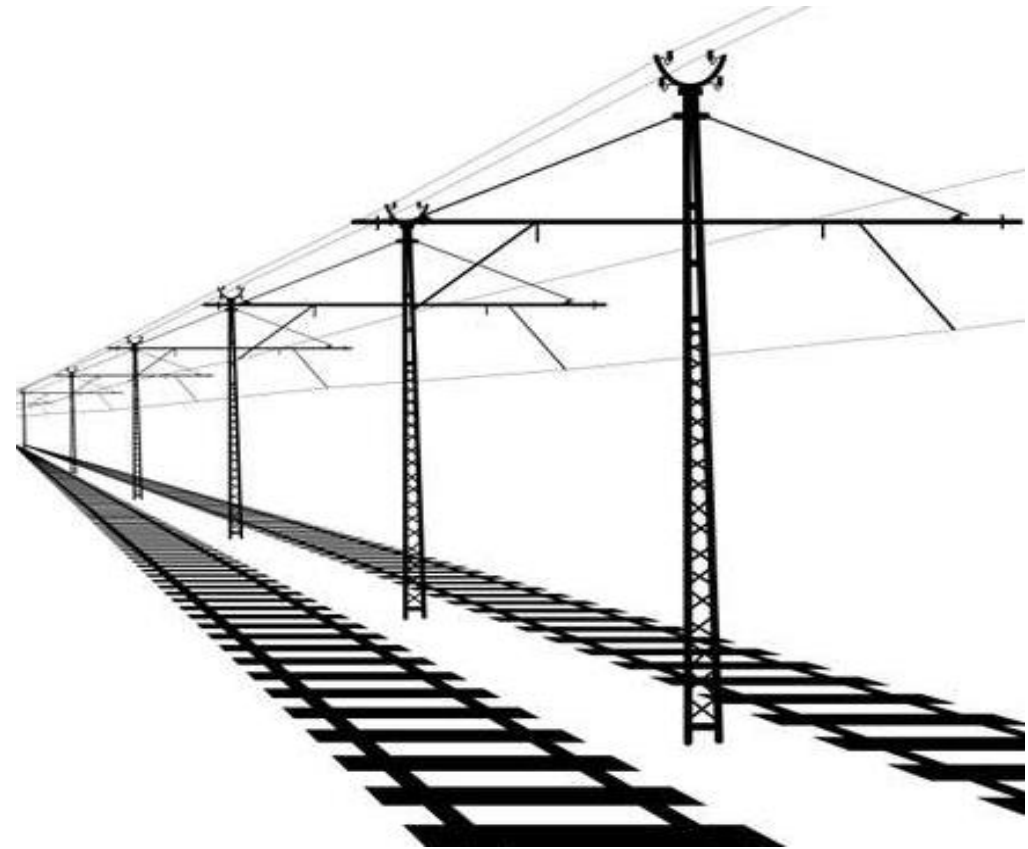
- Weight
- Bulk
- Balance
- Stability
- Hot / Cold
- Grasp



Environment – Open your eyes

Consider:

- Space/ posture
- Underfoot conditions
- Change of levels
- Lighting
- Temperature
- Doors
- Puddles
- Wet or oily wooden sleepers
- Other workers
- Noise
- Do you have a clear space to place the load



Mechanical aids

- Mechanical aids should definitely be provided if it is reasonably practicable to do so and the risks identified can be reduced or eliminated by this means.
- But you should consider mechanical aids in other situations as well – they can improve productivity as well as safety
- Even something as simple as a sack truck or a pipe buggy can make big improvements
- When working on track the opportunities to use mechanical aids are severely limited, though Wheelbarrows , track trolleys or rail skates can be considered.

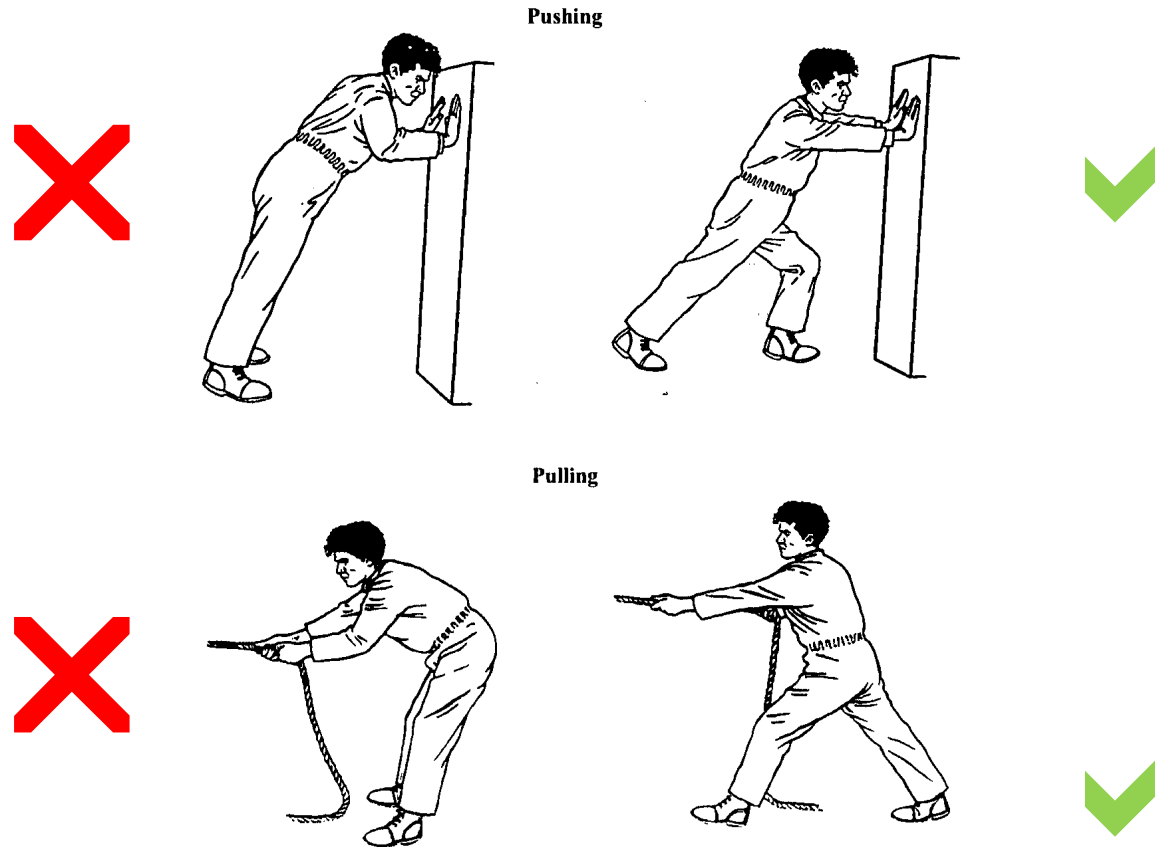


Pushing and pulling

- Stay close to load
- Grip
- Back Straight
- Knees bent
- Lean in direction you are pushing/pulling
- Don't obstruct vision
- Use leg muscles and body weight to reduce strain on back



Correct posture for pulling and pushing



Team lift – work as a team

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Someone must take charge of the operation and then;

- Command attention of the group
- Inform others
- Co-ordinate the movement
- Direct them safely to completion
- Be the individual who communicates the lift, e.g. "1,2,3, lift."



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