



Australian Government

Comcare

## WORKER MANUAL TASK CHECKLIST

This Checklist is based on the sources of risk identified in the *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice*.

The Checklist is designed to draw your attention to potential risks across a number of areas:

- > work area design and layout
- > systems of work and work organisation
- > loads, tools, machinery and equipment
- > workplace environment
- > other considerations.

Simply mark either 'yes' or 'no' after considering each question in 'What to look for'. If a tick is placed in the shaded column, look for guidance under the 'What can I do?' column.

If you have doubts about any of the questions or concerns about your answers, discuss these with your line manager or seek guidance from your health and safety representative (HSR). It's important to remember never to attempt a manual task that is beyond your capability or if you are otherwise unsure.

Sources of risk	What to look for	Yes	No	What can I do?
Work area design and layout	Is the workstation and equipment suitable for you, that is, are awkward postures like bending, twisting and reaching avoided through appropriate workstation set up?			Raise, lower or reposition the activity. Position tools and other items to avoid bending, twisting or reaching. Use arm supports for precision work.
	Is there sufficient space for working movements and materials, for example, sufficient knee and foot room?			Ensure workstations are adjustable to suit worker requirements and that there is sufficient clearance under and around work surfaces to accommodate the nature of the task.
	Is the workstation and equipment adjustable to suit your stature, the angle or position of work?			Seating needs to be adjustable with a swivel base and include an adjustable back rest. A foot rest should be utilised where feet do not reach the floor. Ideally, the work area should accommodate a standing alternative.
Systems of work and work organisation	Is the task repetitive (performed more than twice per minute) or sustained (a posture or force held for more than 30 seconds at a time)?			Redesign jobs so that a variety of movement can be incorporated. Alternate posture with a mix of activity. Introduce staged alternate movement at regular intervals. Adhere to regular short duration breaks.
	Is the task of long duration for more than two hours in a shift or continuously for more than 30 minutes at a time?			Alternate posture with a sit-stand workstation or activity mix. Include a rail at the base of work benches for foot support. Redesign jobs so that a variety of movement can be incorporated. Introduce movement with regular short walks. Ensure regular breaks are taken to aid recovery.
	Is the pace of work able to be varied across the day or shift?			Plan work so that there is scope for variation. Ensure that regular stretch breaks are taken.
	Can you influence the workload or work method?			Discuss with your line manager alternative work methods, pace and break structures. Discuss concerns with your HSR where necessary.
	Do you feel change management is undertaken well in your organisation?			Discuss your concerns with your line manager and HSR.
	Can the task be varied or rotated?			Plan job rotation so that the same body parts are not used repeatedly. Ensure that regular breaks are taken. Introduce staged alternate movement at regular intervals.
	Are regular breaks able to be taken?			Plan work so that short regular breaks can be taken when needed, otherwise create organised breaks in paced jobs.
	Does the pace or amount of work result in you feeling stressed or fatigued?			Discuss with your line manager alternative work methods, pace and break structures. Seek advice from your HSR.
	Do you feel that you have a clear role and responsibility?			Discuss your concerns with your line manager, HR, and HSR.
	Do you feel supported by your line manager and colleagues?			Discuss your concerns with your line manager or colleagues, or with the employee assistance program. Seek advice from your HSR.
	Is workplace conflict an issue?			Review any relevant policy and/or training. Discuss your concerns with the employee assistance program. Seek advice from your HSR or Harassment Contact Officer. Discuss your concerns with your line manager, or, where unavailable your second tier manager.

<i>Loads, tools, machinery and equipment</i>	Can mechanical aids be used to perform the task?			Use mechanical aids in preference to physically shifting heavy loads either individually or as a team lift. Discuss with your line manager or HSR alternate work methods to reduce risk.
	Can you grip the load properly, that is, are there appropriate handles or an appropriate gripping surface?			Have handles put on boxes or containers when loads are moved frequently or are hard to grasp. Handles should be sized and appropriate for the broadest cross section of users. Where handles are not appropriate, look at using hooks, suction equipment or containers.
	Is the load stable?			Split the load. Try to make loads as light or small as possible through repackaging. Otherwise, use appropriate mechanical aids.
	Is the load too heavy for you to lift?			Split the load. Try to make loads as light or small as possible through repackaging. Otherwise, use appropriate mechanical aids.
	Does lifting the load place your body in an awkward posture or position?			Do not lift the object without rearranging, seeking assistance or using a mechanical aid.
	Does the task expose you to bending, twisting, sustained movement, high or sudden force?			Task redesign may be in order. Discuss with your line manager measures to reduce the risk. Seek guidance from your HSR.
	Are you using the correct tool for the job?			Is the tool too heavy? Is the tool well balanced, oriented to a comfortable grip and well maintained? Always use the appropriate tool for the corresponding job. If one is not provided, discuss this with your line manager.
	Does the task require the prolonged use of tools?			Redesign the task to reduce prolonged use. Substitute with prefabricated materials where possible. Ensure appropriate breaks to recover from fatigue.
	Does the use of tools require sustained force?			Substitute hand held for fixed tools. Redesign the work area to support the task. Wherever possible substitute with prefabricated materials.
	Are you trained to do this task?			If not trained do not attempt the task. Consult your line manager and where necessary your HSR.
	Do you have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?			A task should not be attempted without correct PPE when required. Make sure the PPE is maintained and does not interfere with the task. If in doubt, discuss with your line manager or HSR.
	Are you exposed to vibration (whole of body, hands or arms) while completing the task?			Ensure contact points are appropriately insulated. Use an alternate tool or work method to eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration. Adjust operating speed to limit exposure to vibration. Increase rest intervals to allow for recovery.
<i>Workplace environment</i>	Is the work environment too hot, humid or too cold?			Where possible relocate the task to a more suitable environment. Ensure that you have regular breaks in a warm or air-conditioned place. Wear weather-appropriate PPE.
	Is the floor surface you are working on free of obstruction, not uneven or slippery?			Adopt good housekeeping. Ensure the area is clear of obstruction before attempting the task. Report any obstructions or surface concerns. Seek advice from your line manager or HSR where necessary.
	Is the lighting appropriate, that is, not too dim or bright with no glare or reflection?			Use task lighting or otherwise change the orientation of the lights to increase or decrease illumination or decrease glare.
<i>Other considerations</i>	Are there any individual factors that might affect how easily you can do the job, for example, age, injury history, disability, level of conditioning, lowered resilience to emotional or biological task demands?			If you have history of injury, are unsure or have any concerns, consult your line manager about what reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate your needs before attempting the task.
	Are you a new employee, returning from a period of injury or other absence from work?			Talk to your line manager about a graduated return to the pre break or standard work pace to avoid injury or re-injury. Take more frequent shorter duration breaks and rotate to other tasks where able.
	Do you feel any pain or discomfort following the task or activity?			Lodge an incident report. Discuss your concerns with your line manager and HSR.

## IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### My workplace:

Workplace information on Manual Tasks is located at:

My HSR is:

Contact details:

### On the internet:

See the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice at [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

See Health and Safety Topics in the Safety and Prevention portal at [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au)