

These FAQs have been developed to be read in conjunction with the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA)¹, position paper on 'how to lift' training.

If 'how to lift' training is not an effective method for managing hazardous manual tasks in the workplace, then what is?

Following risk management principles specific to hazardous manual tasks, in consultation with your workers.

This looks like;

- Identifying which manual tasks are hazardous (manual tasks that expose a worker to one or more hazardous manual tasks risk factors – see table 1.)
- Determining why a task is hazardous (i.e. you need to determine the source of the risk. See table 1)
- Eliminating the hazard, then controlling any remaining risk by following the hierarchy of control. Your control measure(s) should address the source of the risk
- Maintaining and reviewing the control(s) to ensure continuing effectiveness

Note – Following a risk management cycle will help you meet your Work Health and Safety obligations

The position talks about hazardous manual task risk factors and the sources of risk, what are they?

Hazardous manual task risk factors (Being exposed to one or more of these can lead to an injury)	Sources of the risk (These are the things that are responsible for a risk factor being present):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive or sustained forces • High or sudden forces • Sustained or awkward postures • Repetitive movement • Exposure to vibration • Duration and/or frequency of the task (when one or more of the above risk factors is present) • Mental stress / work pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace design and layout • Systems of work including organisational and psychosocial factors e.g. work rate, lack of job control • Work environment e.g. poor lighting • The nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things involved in the task

Table 1 – Hazardous manual task risk factors and sources of risk

For example – it may be due to the layout of the work area that a worker is in an awkward posture, or the work procedures may impose repetitive movement.

Note - 'how to lift' training does not address the source of the risk, or a worker's exposure to hazardous manual tasks risk factors.

¹ The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) comprises senior representatives from the work health and safety regulators in the Commonwealth and states / territories of Australia and New Zealand. The 'how to lift' training position paper was developed by a HWSA MSD working party, whose membership comprises representatives from: Comcare, SafeWork NSW, SafeWork SA, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, WorkSafe Tasmania, WorkSafe Victoria, WorkSafe WA and WorkSafe New Zealand.

Is 'how to lift' training a requirement under WHS/OHS laws?

No, there is no prescribed requirement for a business to provide 'how to lift' training.

This position was written to clarify that providing 'how to lift' training is not a requirement under any Australian or New Zealand work/occupational health and safety legislation.

What training should be provided to workers in relation to hazardous manual tasks?

As stated in the position statement (and Australian Codes of Practice/Compliance Codes), training should cover

- manual task risk management, including hazardous manual task risk factors and sources of risk
- specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them
- how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures
- how to report a problem or maintenance issues

Are pre-work stretching and exercises good methods for controlling hazardous manual task risks?

These programs do not address the source of the risk, or a worker's exposure to hazardous manual tasks risk factors. You must follow the risk management principles specific to hazardous manual tasks (refer to Q1 above)

When looking to engage a service provider to assist our business manage hazardous manual tasks, what should I look for?

- A provider that is aware of and operates in line with the HWSA 'how to lift' position statement.
- They have a thorough understanding of the legislative requirements for managing hazardous manual tasks.
- Knowledge and experience in identifying hazardous manual tasks, and conducting hazardous manual task risk assessments that identify the source/s of risk
- They focus on, and have the ability to, identify interventions that follow the hierarchy of control and address the source/s of risk.
- A provider that utilises a consultative approach with relevant workers.

Note – it is advisable to get the provider to show you examples/references of how they follow the above points.