

# Safety briefing: handling injuries



If you have a concern about manual handling on your site, raise it with your supervisor or manager immediately.

## **Don't wait until someone gets hurt.**

Manual handling operations means any transporting or supporting of a load with your hand or body, including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving.

Handling injuries can be strains, sprains, trapped fingers and cuts.

Most injuries are to hands, backs and feet.

Hands can be injured by strains and sprains, skin irritation, punctures and cuts. If tendons or nerves are severed, the injury can be major. Feet and ankles can be cut, crushed or even amputated. Backs can be damaged in many different ways, some of them permanent.

A disabling bodily injury can have a dramatic effect on your quality of life. It can impact on your ability to perform your job, and also daily routines. These injuries can occur in a second, but the social, financial and emotional effects can last a lifetime.

- **Use the correct gloves to reduce risk of hand injuries.** (Be aware that the wrong type of glove can sometimes give a false sense of protection.)
- **Wear the correct boots.** Safety boots that give toe and mid sole protection and ankle support, marked 'EN345' with 'S3', are mandatory at VGC Group. (Some projects have additional requirements - you will have been told about these at induction.)
- **Control the risks from manual handling.** Consider:
  1. **Avoid:** Do you need manual handling? Can you use a tool instead eg a sack barrow?
  2. **Assess:** What are you planning to do? What is the risk of injury?
  3. **Reduce the risk:** If you can't reasonably avoid manual handling, reduce the risk, for example by getting someone to help you, and by lifting properly.

Between April 2016 and March 2017 around 680,000 workers suffered non-fatal injuries as a result of work activity. About 22% of these were attributed to handling injuries. (This is up from 20% in 2015-2016.) This resulted in an estimated 8.9 million working days lost. An average of 17.6 days were taken off work for each musculoskeletal injury.

## **What must employees do?**

- You must take reasonable care of yourself, and others who may be affected by your actions.
- You must co-operate with your employer so they can comply with their health and safety duties and requirements.

## **The law says that you must:**

- report any safety hazard you identify to your employer
- use the equipment and safety devices supplied to you properly, and in accordance with any training and instructions provided.

If you are worried about manual handling on your site, tell your labour manager or HSQE. Or use our confidential whistleblowing online form at [vgcgroup.co.uk/whistle](http://vgcgroup.co.uk/whistle)