

Hu-Tech Newsletter no. 12: May 2004

Welcome to our May newsletter. In this issue we highlight some recent HSE research and new guidance on Manual Handling which was issued in April. We would also like to let you know of our forthcoming IOSH DSE workstation assessors training course, in London on 25/26th May. We also have a 2 day ergonomics risk assessment course planned for 29/30th June.

Amended Manual Handling Operations Regulations and revised guidance

HSE published the revised MHO Regulations and guidance in April 2004. The guidance incorporates improvements in the knowledge of the risks from manual handling and how to avoid them. Specifically there is revised guidance on the principles of good manual handling in standard (2 handed symmetrical) handling and in non-standard situations. There is also guidance on pushing and pulling (see below) and reference to the HSE's MAC (Manual Handling Assessment Charts).

Copies of L23 are available from HSE Books www.hsebooks.co.uk, price £8.95

The accompanying guidance (INDG 143) '*Getting to grips with manual handling: a short guide*', is a simple and clear guide to the Regulations and the requirements placed on businesses. It can be downloaded free at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

HSE research into the risks associated with pushing and pulling heavy loads

HSE has just published research, the findings of which have been incorporated into the revised L23 guidance, into ways to assess risks associated with pushing and pulling heavy loads. RIDDOR statistics for 1986 – 1999 show that 11% of manual handling injuries were due to pushing and pulling. These injuries arose not only from physical exertion in pushing / pulling but other risks associated with these tasks, such as limb or finger trapping, slipping or falling or equipment breakages. Risk assessments should consider not only the force applied but these other risks associated with pushing and pulling.

The study concluded that the risk filter guidelines in L23 for starting / stopping a load should be reduced to 20kg for men and 15kg for women, and the force required for keeping the load in motion be 10kg for men and 7kg for women. However, they acknowledge that many people will not know how to measure these forces, or have the equipment to do so. [Pulling on a spring balance (which can mark the peak force applied) that is attached to the handle is a simple way to obtain this for pulling forces, but more sophisticated equipment is required for measuring pushing forces].

These guideline figures assume that the force is applied with the hands positioned between knuckle and shoulder height, and that the distance involved is no more than 20m on the level. Where these assumptions are not met, a more detailed risk assessment is required; a risk assessment checklist for pushing and pulling, following the format of the manual handling risk assessment (considering the load, individual, task and environment) is included. Due to the greater complexities of assessing pushing and pulling tasks, greater competence may be required for undertaking an assessment on these tasks than on lifting and lowering tasks.

The research report also includes helpful guidance on trolley design and selection. The full report can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr228.htm> (RR228: Review of the risks associated with pushing and pulling heavy loads)

HSE publishes research on the management of people with upper limb disorders

This study was commissioned to identify how physiotherapists and occupational health nurses can become more effective in the diagnosis, treatment and overall management of people with upper limb disorders (ULDs). The recommendations included better communication and collaboration between the workplace and the healthcare professionals, possibly with physios being based within workplaces and occupational health teams. Further recommendations were that physiotherapy training should include a greater emphasis on ergonomics, that guidance documents should be produced on managing ULDs, and that further research should be undertaken in this area to identify the most effective methods and the costs and benefits of these. This may lead to improved recovery and return to work rates.

The full report is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr215.pdf> (RR215: The challenge of managing upper limb disorders – how can health professionals become more effective?)

HSE research report - Human Factors guidance for selecting appropriate maintenance strategies for safety in the offshore oil and gas industry

HSE has published a research report that identifies ways in which Human Factors best practice may be integrated into an offshore maintenance strategy. Over time, maintenance activities will inevitably lead to incidents/accidents due to human error. Although, it will never be possible to completely eradicate error of this nature, it is feasible to integrate controls and defences against such errors. Typically, these are implemented either during design and construction or in response to incidents and accidents. This report focuses on iterating human factors considerations within the safety case.

The report is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr213.htm (RR213 - Human factors guidance for selecting appropriate maintenance strategies for safety in the offshore oil and gas industry). Hu-Tech is increasingly working in this area with some of our multinational oil and gas clients.

IOSH DSE Workstation Assessors training course

We are delighted to have been approved to deliver the **IOSH** 'Assessing risks for computer users' course, and are running this on 25th and 26th May in London. The course will enable delegates to become competent in undertaking DSE risk assessments as required by the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002). It will cover the risks to health of DSE work, how to avoid these through appropriate selection of equipment, furniture, software and design of jobs, and how to undertake risk assessments. The management issues relating to this will also be covered. We are particularly pleased that Bill Fine of **AbilityNet** is able to present a session of the course. AbilityNet is a UK charity that specialises in computer use adaptations for those who have some physical limitations (www.abilitynet.org.uk). This session will give delegates familiarity and confidence in making recommendations for colleagues who may experience discomfort at work.

The course involves a short exam (30 minutes), successful completion of which leads to a certificate from IOSH (www.iosh.org.uk). Further details and a booking form are available on our website: http://www.hu-tech.co.uk/training-workstation_assessors.html Alternatively, please contact margaret@hu-tech.co.uk (0131 718 4232) for further details.

Other training courses

We are running a 2 day **Ergonomic Risk Assessment** course, aimed particularly at those in industrial environments, on 29th and 30th June in London. For further details see: <http://www.hu-tech.co.uk/training-industry.html>

The 5 day **Ergonomics Essentials** course we delivered in Edinburgh in March was well attended, with representatives from a range of manufacturing and service sectors. We are running the course again in Northampton from 22-26th September 2004 and still have some spaces on it.

If you would like any further information on any of these news items, please contact us on:

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