



## 9.3 Manual Handling Policy

<b>Name of Policy:</b>	Manual Handling Policy
<b>Section:</b>	WH&S
<b>Responsibility:</b>	All Staff
<b>Department:</b>	All Departments
<b>Location:</b>	All Offices

### Introduction

VISA is committed to preventing and reducing injuries associated with the Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

*VISA will achieve this by:*

- Promoting and supporting a consultative process between employees and managers
- Ensuring that all manual handling tasks likely to be a risk to health and safety are assessed and control measures are implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk
- Eliminating problems with equipment, procedures and the workplace surroundings

Every employee is encouraged to raise and discuss manual handling issues of concern so that VISA can continuously improve our health and safety performance.

### What is Manual Handling?

Manual handling refers to any activity requiring a person to use any part of their muscular or skeletal system in their interactions with their work environment. Manual Handling includes activities involving lifting or lowering, pushing or pulling, holding or restraining, carrying or otherwise handling, throwing or rolling, grasping or manipulating and striking an object, with or without a tool. It also describes tasks involving repetitive actions, with or without force, sustained work postures and exposure to whole body or hand-arm vibration. Examples of manual handling also include repetitive computer and mouse work.

Incorrect manual handling techniques place employees at greater risk of injury, especially to muscles, joints and nerves.

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## What is Occupational Overuse Syndrome?

Occupational overuse syndrome (OOS) is a type of manual handling injury which covers a range of conditions characterised by discomfort or persistent pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues. It is usually associated with tasks involving repetitive movement, sustained or unnatural postures, or forceful movements.

## Objectives

*The objectives of this policy are to:*

- Prevent/reduce the occurrence of manual handling incidents
- Reduce the severity of injuries when they do occur
- Satisfy legislative requirements
- Reduce and eliminate manual handling where possible
- Promote and supply the use of manual handling equipment

*Three Steps to Reducing Manual Handling Injuries:*

1. Identifying manual handling hazards
2. Assessing the risk of those manual handling hazards identified causing injury
3. Eliminating the risk, or if not practicable reduce the risk to the lowest practicable level

## Who is Responsible?

VISA has a legislative requirement to eliminate risks related to manual handling. VISA is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for employees and visitors.

All employees must be trained in the appropriate manual handling techniques for the tasks that they are required to perform in their jobs.

All employees must work within their range of comfort and ability when undertaking manual handling tasks and not expose themselves or others to the risk of injury.

Employees are encouraged to take regular rest breaks when seated at a computer workstation for a long period of time. Employees should move around and reduce the effects of fatigue by doing different tasks if possible.

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## How to sit at your computer

### Step 1 - Your Chair



- Push your hips as far back as they can go in the chair.
- Adjust the seat height so your feet are flat on the floor and your knees equal to, or slightly lower than, your hips.
- Adjust the back of the chair to a 100°-110° reclined angle. Make sure your upper and lower back are supported. Use inflatable cushions or small pillows if necessary. If you have an active back mechanism on your chair, use it to make frequent position changes.
- Adjust the armrests (if fitted) so that your shoulders are relaxed. If your armrests are in the way, remove them.

### Step 2 - Your Keyboard



- Pull up close to your keyboard.
- Position the keyboard directly in front of your body.
- Determine what section of the keyboard you use most frequently, and readjust the keyboard so that section is centred with your body.
- Adjust the keyboard height so that your shoulders are relaxed, your elbows are in a slightly open position (100° to 110°), and your wrists and hands are straight.
- The tilt of your keyboard is dependent upon your sitting position. Use the keyboard tray mechanism, or keyboard feet, to adjust the tilt. If you sit in a forward or upright position, try tilting your keyboard away from you at a negative angle. If you are reclined, a slight positive tilt will help maintain a straight wrist position.
- Wrist rests can help to maintain neutral postures and pad hard surfaces. However, the wrist rest should only be used to rest the palms of the hands between keystrokes. Resting on the wrist rest while typing is not recommended. Avoid using excessively wide wrist rests, or wrist rests that are higher than the space bar of your keyboard.
- Place the pointer as close as possible to the keyboard. Placing it on a slightly inclined surface, or using it on a mouse bridge placed over the 10-key pad, can help to bring it closer.

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### Step 3 - Monitor, Documents and Telephone



Incorrect positioning of the screen and source documents can result in awkward postures. Adjust the monitor and source documents so that your neck is in a neutral, relaxed position.

- Centre the monitor directly in front of you, above your keyboard.
- Position the top of the monitor approximately 2-3" above seated eye level. (If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor to a comfortable reading level.)
- Sit at least an arm's length away from the screen and then adjust the distance for your vision.
- Reduce glare by careful positioning of the screen.
  - Place screen at right angles to windows
  - Adjust curtains or blinds as needed
  - Adjust the vertical screen angle and screen controls to minimize glare from overhead lights
  - Other techniques to reduce glare include use of optical glass glare filters, light filters, or secondary task lights
- Position source documents directly in front of you, between the monitor and the keyboard, using an in-line copy stand. If there is insufficient space, place source documents on a document holder

### Step 4 - Pauses and Breaks



Once you have correctly set up your computer workstation use good work habits. No matter how perfect the environment, prolonged, static postures will inhibit blood circulation and take a toll on your body.

- Take short 1-2 minute stretch breaks every 20-30 minutes. After each hour of work, take a break or change tasks for at least 5-10 minutes. Always try to get away from your computer during lunch breaks.
- Avoid eye fatigue by resting and refocusing your eyes periodically. Look away from the monitor and focus on something in the distance.
- Rest your eyes by covering them with your palms for 10-15

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**Follow these tips to make your work station more comfortable**

<b>Body part fatigued</b>	<b>Common contributing factors</b>	<b>What can you try</b>
Back of neck	Looking down at documents or keyboard	Use a document holder. Improve keyboard skills. Check monitor height.
Side of neck	Looking to one side	Locate documents and screen directly in front of you
Top of shoulders, outside or front of shoulders	Keyboard too high, arms unsupported	Raise chair, use footrest, rest palms on front of desk, reduce desk height (if adjustable)
Lower back	Inadequate lumbar support	Adjust back rest height and angle to give firm support, remove arms from chair, remove obstructions under desk (eg drawers)
Upper back	Twisted posture	Sit straight on, locate documents, screen and keyboard in front of you
Right arm or shoulder	Arm outstretched unsupported	Move mouse closer, use single surface desk
Left arm, shoulder or neck	Reaching for telephone or cradling telephone on shoulder	Bring phone closer. Use headset.
Leg discomfort, swollen feet	Underside of thighs compressed against chair seat	Use footrest or reduce desk and chair height
Headaches	Posture, visual problems, noise, stress, glare, high work load	Rearrange work area; re-direct traffic; screen filter; close blinds; shut door; vary tasks; take micropauses; smooth out work flow; reduce time on computer; eye test.
Eye fatigue, temporary short sightedness	Visual problems, screen too close, poor image quality, glare, screen reflections	Rearrange work area; screen filter; close blinds; vary tasks; take micropauses; eye test.

**For further information please contact Human Resources.**

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