



Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Mandatory – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, as the employer of staff, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees at the service.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and welfare, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards is undertaken at the service
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the service environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the service
- it fulfils its obligations under current and future laws (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*), and that all relevant codes of practice are adopted and accepted as a minimum standard.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Everyone involved in an early childhood education and care service has a role to play in ensuring the service's operations are safe and without risk to the health and safety of all parties. In Victoria, health

and safety in the workplace is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes that set out the responsibilities of employers and employees to ensure safety is maintained at work.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* specifies the ways duties imposed by the OHS Act must be undertaken and prescribes procedural/administrative matters to support the OHS Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, or the need to keep records or notify authorities on certain matters.

The legal duties of an **employer** under the OHS Act are:

- to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This responsibility extends to contractors for routine tasks over which the employer has management. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, the employer must ensure that the service's daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks
- to ensure other individuals, such as families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the organisation's activities
- to consult with employees about OHS matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards and assessing risks, and making decisions about risk control measures.

The OHS Act places the responsibility on **employees** for:

- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the employer, including following guidelines, attending OHS-related training, reporting incidents, co-operating with OHS investigations, encouraging good OHS practice with fellow employees and others at the service, and assisting the employer with conducting OHS inspections during operating hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided at the service, such as fire extinguishers.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Accident Compensation Act 1985* (Vic)
- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
 - Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times
 - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
 - Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service
 - Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
 - Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
 - Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions*.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable foreseeable harm and injury.

Hazard: An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

Hazard identification: A process that involves identifying all foreseeable hazards in the workplace and understanding the possible harm that each hazard may cause.

Hazard management: A structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and control, aimed at providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, contractors and visitors while on the premises of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. or while engaged in activities endorsed by Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

Harm: Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

Material safety data sheet: Provides employees and emergency personnel with safety procedures for working with toxic or dangerous materials. The data sheet includes all relevant information about the material such as physical properties (e.g. melting/boiling point, toxicity and reactivity), health effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g. personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and management of spills).

OHS committee: A committee that facilitates co-operation between an employer and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace.

Risk: The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

Risk assessment: A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur
- how harm can occur
- the likelihood that harm will occur.

Risk control: A measure, work process or system that eliminates an OHS hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Early Childhood Management Manual*, ELAA
- *Getting into the Act*, WorkSafe Victoria
- *Getting help to improve health and safety*, WorkSafe Victoria
- *Guide to the OHS Act 2004*, WorkSafe Victoria
- *Managing safety in your workplace*, WorkSafe Victoria
- OHS in Early Childhood Services (ELAA): www.ohsinecservices.org.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (OHS Act: Section 21). This includes ensuring that:
 - there are safe systems of work
 - all plant and equipment provided for use by staff, including machinery, appliances and tools etc., are safe and meet relevant safety standards
 - substances, and plant and equipment, are used, handled, and stored safely
 - material safety data sheets are supplied for all chemicals kept and/or used at the service (refer to: www.ohsinecservices.org.au)
 - there are adequate welfare facilities e.g. first aid and dining facilities etc.
 - there is appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for employees(Note: *This duty of care is owed to all employees, children, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, contractors and any members of the public who are at the workplace at any time*)
- ensuring there is a systematic risk management approach (refer to: www.ohsinecservices.org.au) to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that:
 - hazards and risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or, if it is not possible to remove the hazard/risk completely, effectively controlled
 - measures employed to eliminate/control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly
- ensuring regular safety audits of the following:
 - indoor and outdoor environments
 - all equipment, including emergency equipment
 - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
 - cleaning services
 - horticultural maintenance
 - pest control
- monitoring the conditions of the workplace and the health of employees (OHS Act: Section 22)
- protecting other individuals from risks arising from the service's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours (OHS Act: Section 23)
- providing adequate instruction to staff in safe working procedures, and informing them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work that they perform at the service
- ensuring that all plant, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe condition
- developing procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace
- ensuring that OHS accountability is included in all position descriptions
- allocating adequate resources to implement this policy

- ensuring this policy is made available to all staff, volunteers and parents
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- consulting appropriately with employees on OHS matters including:
 - identification of hazards
 - making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks
 - making decisions on health and safety procedures
 - proposed changes at the service that may impact on health and safety
- notifying WorkSafe Victoria about serious workplace incidents, and preserving the site of an incident (OHS Act: Sections 38–39)
- holding appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the OHS Act
- attempting to resolve OHS issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe
- not discriminating against employees who are involved in health and safety negotiations
- allowing access to an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within his/her powers under the OHS Act
- producing OHS documentation as required by inspectors and answering any questions that an inspector asks
- not obstructing, misleading or intimidating an inspector who is performing his/her duties.

The above list of procedures is not exhaustive. Services must develop specific procedures to be followed in managing hazards and issues identified. Such specific issues include chemical management, purchasing of equipment, hazard identification and risk assessment etc. For more information and guidance, refer to: www.ohsinecservices.org.au

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:

- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the service
- organising/facilitating regular safety audits of the following:
 - indoor and outdoor environments
 - all equipment, including emergency equipment
 - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
 - cleaning services
 - horticultural maintenance
 - pest control
- ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and not accessible to children.
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)

- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

All other educators/staff are responsible for:

- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the Approved Provider, including:
 - following OHS rules and guidelines
 - helping to ensure housekeeping is of the standard set out in service policies
 - attending OHS training as required
 - reporting OHS incidents
 - co-operating with OHS investigations
 - encouraging good OHS practices with fellow employees and others attending the service
 - assisting the Approved Provider with tasks relating to OHS, such as conducting OHS inspections during working hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided by the Approved Provider
- practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- keeping up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children (refer to *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

Students on placements, volunteers, contractors and parents/guardians at the service are responsible for:

- being familiar with this policy
- co-operating with reasonable OHS rules implemented by the service
- not acting recklessly and/or placing the health and safety of other adults or children at the service at risk.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to occupational health and safety issues
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. Manual Handling Policy.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. Committee of Management on 17 June 2019

REVIEW DATE: JUNE 2021

Attachment 1

Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc. Manual Handling Safety Policy

This policy sets out the procedures that must be followed when undertaking manual handling.

1. Lifting Operating Procedure

Manual Handling means any activity requiring the use of force extended by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise hold or restrain an object.

Manual handling injuries often involve such things as lifting and carrying a load. Even a light load or excessive and frequent bending, twisting or awkward posture can result in a manual handling injury. Use lifting and carrying aids provided.

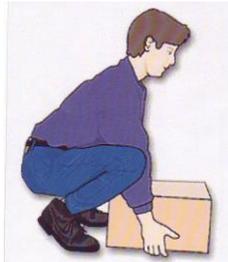
Safety Instructions

- Assess the load for weight. Use a trolley or other aid if the load is too heavy or awkward to lift and carry. Inspect the condition of the lifting aid before use.
- Check the condition of the load. Is it secure; does it have sharp edges; contain a hazardous substance or need to be disconnected from a power source?
- Plan the lift. Do you need to open a door? Where will you put the load down?
- Warm up using light stretching before lifting.
- Use the following correct lifting technique:
 - Use an even and balanced stance.
 - Squat down using your legs.
 - Use a firm grip using the palms of your hands.
 - Lift smoothly using your legs and keeping your back straight.
 - Keep the load close to your body and maintain the same grip.
 - Avoid twisting, bending and stretching your body.

- Use the same technique for putting a load down.
- Never store or lift heavy loads above shoulder height.
- Report all manual handling concerns, hazards and equipment faults to the Committee of Management of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

Caution

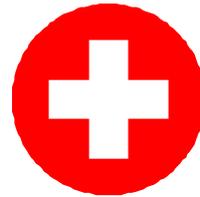
Avoid lifting heavy and awkward loads; excessive or frequent bending and twisting of the body; and awkward posture while lifting and carrying.



The Right Lift



The Wrong Lift



Report Accidents and
Seek First Aid

2. Lifting a Small Child Operating Procedure

You are responsible for the safety of the child as well as yourself when lifting, carrying and putting a child down.

Safety Instructions

- Sharp and loose or protruding jewellery that can be grabbed or become entangled must not be worn.
- Flat-soled and non-slip footwear must be worn.
- Avoid stooping, bending and awkward posture while picking up, carrying and putting down a child.
- Avoid carrying heavy objects or performing awkward tasks while carrying or holding a child.
- Do not run or hurry while carrying a child.
- Avoid slippery surfaces; items on the floor; and other children.
- When lifting a child use a balanced stance; squat down; support the child close to your body with both arms; and lift using your legs.
- Keep your back straight as possible and avoid twisting while lifting, carrying and putting down a child.
- When putting a child down use a balanced stance; squat down; and support the child close to your body with both arms.
- Report all faulty equipment and hazards to the Committee of Management of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.

Caution

Beware of bending the lower back; stooping over; awkward posture; and carrying excessive weight.

3. Hazardous manual handling

Hazardous manual handling may involve any of the following characteristics:

- Repetitive or sustained application of force,
- Repetitive or sustained awkward posture,
- Repetitive or sustained movement,
- Application of high force,
- Exposure to sustained vibration,
- Manual handling of live persons or animals,
- Manual handling of unstable or unbalance loads,
- Manual handling of loads which are difficult to grasp or hold.

Some methods that should be considered when identifying tasks involving hazardous manual handling are:

- Looking at injury records to identify tasks where musculoskeletal injuries are occurring.
- Consulting with the employees and health and safety representatives about tasks that are difficult or awkward to carry out.
- Observing the tasks, recording the observations and what we know about how the task is done.

As required by the OHS Regulations 2007, the Committee of Management of Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc., in consultation with employees who complete such tasks will use the following assessment template to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries whenever:

- There is a proposed alteration to objects or to systems of work that include a change in the place where the task is undertaken
- Before an object used in the manual handling task is used for another purpose
- New or additional information is available to the Committee of Management
- Report of a musculoskeletal disorder in the workplace
- After a notifiable incident to WorkSafe Victoria
- For any other reason, if risk control measures are not adequate
- Reasonable request from workplace health and safety representative

All corrective action must be tracked in Committee of Management monthly meetings.

ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES (SEE PART 3 OF MANUAL HANDLING POLICY)

TEMPLATE 1: ASSESSING AND CONTROLLING MANUAL HANDLING RISK

Location of task: Date of assessment:.....

Description of manual handling task:

Persons doing assessment

Work area management representative:

Work area H&S representative:

Others (employees, consultants):

Reason for identification

- Existing task Change in task, object or tool Report of musculoskeletal disorder
 New task New information

The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* require Victorian employers to assess the risk of any hazardous manual handling found in the workplace and put effective measures in place to:

- Prevent injury by eliminating the risk
- Where elimination is not practicable, reduce the risk of injury as much as practicable

How to use this worksheet

Follow the worksheet step by step to:

- Assess tasks in the workplace involving hazardous manual handling
- List appropriate risk control measures
- Implement those measures

Consult with the relevant health and safety representatives and where possible, also involve the employees who do the tasks, when assessing the tasks and planning and introducing risk controls.

Record your assessment!

You must retain your risk assessment if it shows a risk of injury.

Control any risk! This worksheet provides general guidelines only. Some employees may still be at risk of injury because manual handling occurs in a variety of tasks and workplace situations, and injury may be caused by a number of factors. It is important, as far as practicable, to control any risk you find.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Step 1A – Does the task involve repetitive or sustained postures, movements or forces?

Tick yes if the task requires any of the following actions to be done more than twice a minute (repetitive) or more than 30 seconds at a time (sustained).

	Yes	Comments (i.e. when and where is it happening?)
Postures and movements		
Bending the back forwards or sideways more than 20 degrees		
Twisting the back more than 20 degrees		
Backward bending of the back more than 5 degrees		
Bending the head forwards or sideways more than 20 degrees		
Twisting the neck more than 20 degrees		
Bending the head backwards more than 5 degrees		
Working with one or both hands above shoulder height		
Reaching forwards or sideways more than 30cm from the body		
Reaching behind the body		
Squatting, kneeling, crawling, lying, semi-lying or jumping		
Standing with most of the body's weight on one leg		

Twisting, turning, grabbing, picking or wringing actions with the fingers, hands or arms		
Working with the fingers close together or wide apart		
Very fast movements		
Excessive bending of the wrist		
Forces		
Lifting or lowering		
Carrying with one hand or one side of the body		
Exerting force with one hand or one side of the body		
Pushing, pulling or dragging		
Gripping with the fingers pinched together or held wide apart		
Exerting force while in an awkward posture, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting • Moving items while legs are in an awkward posture 		
Holding, supporting or restraining any object, person, animal or tool		

Step 1B – Does the task involve long duration?

	Yes	Comments (i.e. when and where is it happening?)
Tick yes if the task is done for more than 2 hours over a whole shift or continually for more than 30 minutes at a time		

Step 2 – Does the task involve high force?

Tick yes if the task involves any of the following high force actions, even if force is applied only once.

	Yes	Comments (i.e. when and where is it happening?)
Lifting, lowering or carrying heavy loads		
Applying uneven, fast or jerky forces during lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling		
Applying sudden or unexpected forces (e.g. when handling a person or animal)		
Pushing or pulling objects that are hard to move or to stop (e.g. a trolley)		
Using a finger-grip, a pinch-grip or an open-handed grip to handle a heavy or large load		
Exerting force at the limit of the grip span		
Needing to use two hands to operate a tool designed for one hand		
Throwing or catching		
Hitting or kicking		

Holding, supporting or restraining a person, animal or heavy object		
Jumping while holding a load		
Exerting force with the non-preferred hand		
Two or more people need to be assigned to handle a heavy or bulky load		
Exerting high force while in an awkward posture Refer to Step 1A for guidance on awkward postures		

Step 2 continued – Consultation with employees

Tick yes if employees report any of the following about the task.

	Yes	Comments (i.e. when and where is it happening?)
Twisting the back more than 20 degrees		
Pain or significant discomfort during or after the task		
The task can only be done for short periods		
Stronger employees are assigned to do the task		
Employees think the task should be done by more than one person, or seek help to do the task		
Employees say the task is physically very strenuous or difficult to do		

RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Step 3 – Is there a risk?

	Yes	Comments
Does the task involve repetitive or sustained postures, movements or forces, and long duration? Tick yes if you ticked any boxes in Step 1A and Step 1B.		
Does the task involve high force? Tick yes if you ticked any box in Step 2.		
If 'yes' for either or both of above questions, then the task is a risk. Risk control is required.		

Step 4 – Are environmental factors increasing the risk?

Tick yes if any of the following environmental factors are present in the task.

	Yes	Comments
Vibration (hand-arm or whole-body)		
High temperatures		
Radiant heat		
High humidity		
Low temperatures		
Wearing protective clothing while working in hot conditions		
Wearing thick clothing while working in cold conditions (e.g. gloves)		
Handling very cold or frozen objects		

Employees are working in hot conditions and are not used to it		
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Has there been a report of a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) associated with this task?

The report of a MSD associated with the task usually means increased risk so implementing risk controls should be a high priority.

	Yes	Comments
Tick yes if any reports of MSD have been made		

If you found any risk of MSD, you must control it.

Generally, the more boxes you ticked in each section on this worksheet, the greater the risk.

If the assessment shows a risk of MSD, you must keep this record until the task is no longer done or if the task is changed and another assessment is done.

Please also complete the template 2: *Manual Handling Risk Control Worksheet*.

It may be helpful to sketch the task or attach photograph(s) here, and describe the task or area more fully.

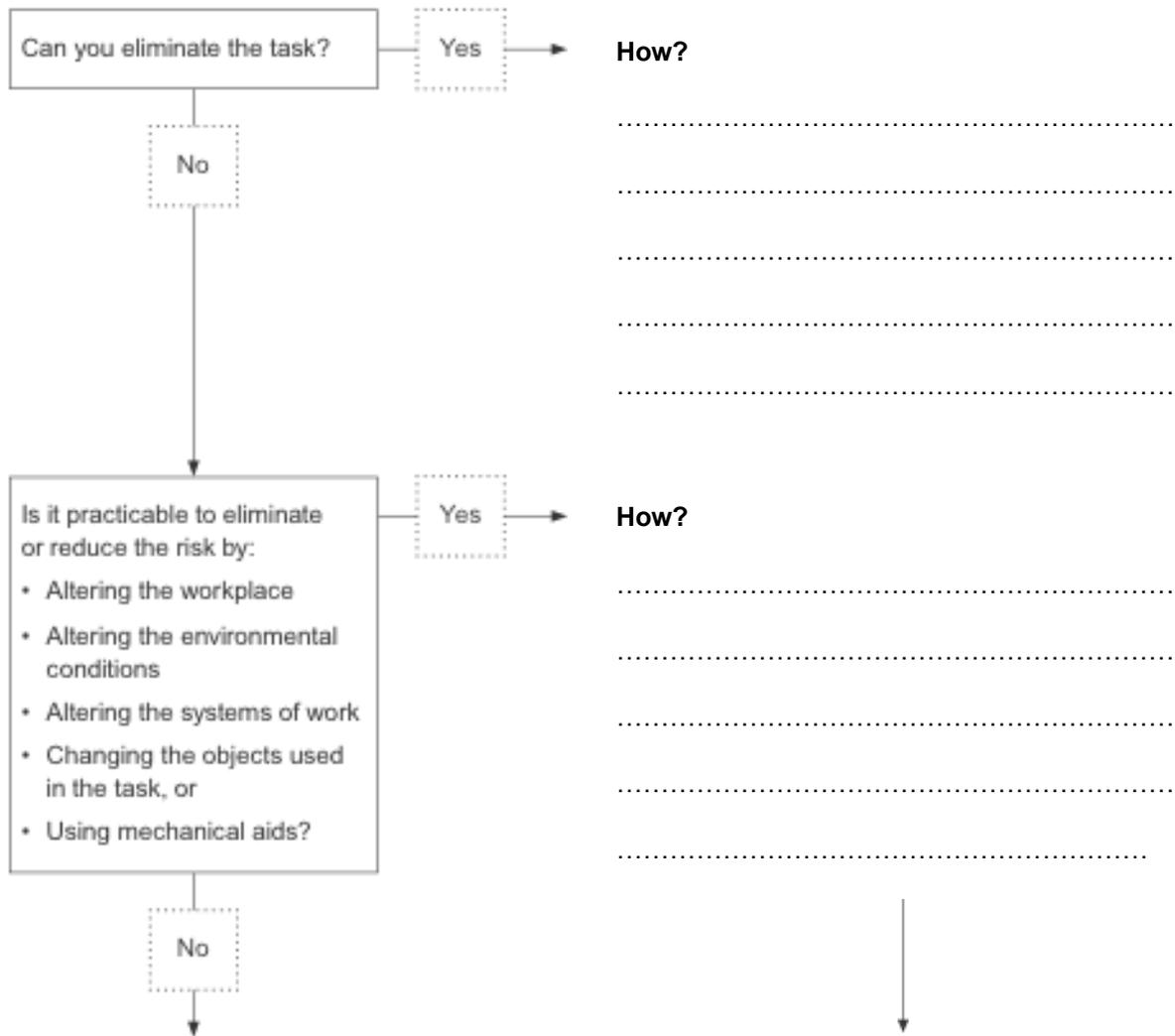
TEMPLATE 2: MANUAL HANDLING RISK CONTROL WORKSHEET

Task: **Date:**

What are the sources of risk?

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How can you (further) reduce the risk with information, instruction and training?

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Timeframe – when will these controls be implemented?

Short-term

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Medium-term

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Long-term

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Who is responsible for making sure that it happens?

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**How do you know the risk controls work?
And when are you going to consult again with employees to review effectiveness?**

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