

## **MANUAL HANDLING**

Manual handling is defined as any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain a person, animal or thing.

Manual handling accounts for a very high proportion of injuries within the construction sector. It forms an integral part of the work environment and provided basic practical safety precautions are taken manual handling tasks should be able to be carried out safely. Regulations do not place absolute limits upon what is safe, or not safe, to manually lift in the workplace. However, employers are required to identify, assess and control manual handling hazards so far as practicable. A code of practice has been approved under section 57 of the OSH Act.

### **Code of Practice for Manual Handling**

The regulations specify that an employer must identify manual handling hazards, assess the risk associated with the identified hazards and consider the means by which risk can be reduced. To assist employers meet the standard set by the regulations WorkSafe WA have produced a code of practice.

In practical terms most employers including contractors on construction sites will have implemented a range of strategies to reduce manual handling and manual handling risks. This could include strategies such as the use of cranes, forklifts, hand trolleys or similar aids, or arranging work to avoid double-handling or purchasing controls to select materials/equipment which are easier to handle.

Some organizations have taken a systematic approach outlined in the Code of Practice and utilized the recording forms provided. However, documenting risk assessment and a systematic approach is not mandated.