

# Guidance on **Musculoskeletal Disorders**

Edition 1 February 2009

QPA Occupational Health Guidance

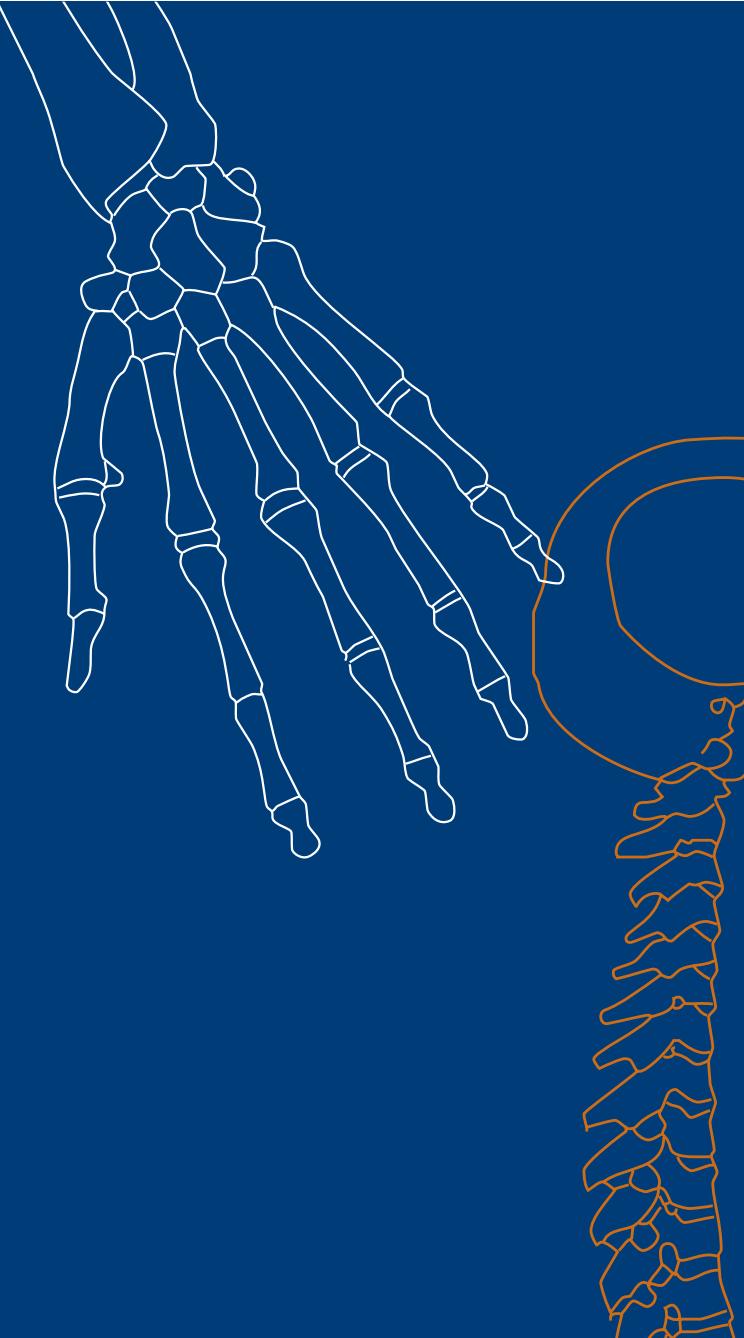
**2**

The trade association for all  
aggregates, asphalt, ready-mixed  
concrete, mortar, silica sand and lime

Gillingham House  
38 - 44 Gillingham Street  
London SW1V 1HU  
Tel 020 7963 8000  
Fax 020 7963 8001  
[info@qpa.org](mailto:info@qpa.org)  
[www.qpa.org](http://www.qpa.org)

© Quarry Products Association 2009





## Legal Requirements

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common occupational illness in Great Britain, affecting a million people a year. They include problems such as lower back pain, joint injuries and repetitive strain injuries of various sorts. These incidents are costing society £5.7 billion a year.

MSDs affect the muscles, joints, tendons and other parts of the musculoskeletal system.

Legal requirement are contained primarily in:

- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- HSE's Revised Manual Handling guidance, March 2004

ISBN 071762823X

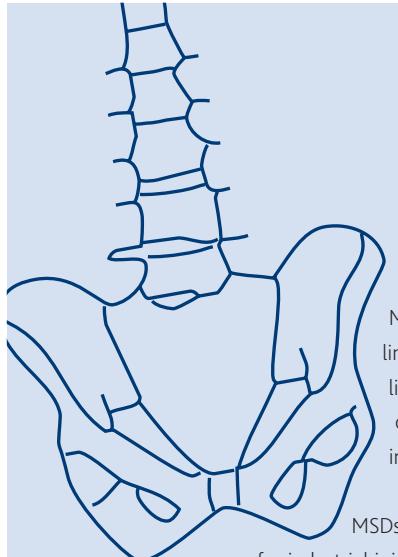
## Why should you read this guidance?

The industry needs to:

- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
- Assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
- Reduce the risk of injury as far as is reasonably practicable
- Carry out health surveillance where there is a risk of injury

Manual handling has become a focus for the HSE through the introduction of the 'Better Backs' campaign. The HSE have also developed a Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC) to assist in the assessment process.

MSDs can be extremely disabling and can be difficult to identify and treat. This can result in long term sickness, which has to be covered by overtime by other employees or the use of contract staff, both of which can introduce other Safety and Health issues into the workplace.



MSDs have clear links with general life style factors of the individual.

MSDs can be the cause for industrial injury claims made against the employer.

Primarily, the issues focus on maintenance activities and some operational processes, also the use of Display Screen Equipment specifically for office workers.

## Paybacks/Benefits to the business

- Effective risk management of the workforce regarding risks to their health
- Improved performance from the workforce
- Less fatigue experienced by the workforce
- No development of MSDs for the individual worker
- Removes the risk of injury claims and prosecution by the HSE
- Potential reduction to employee liability insurance premiums

- Prevention of repeat injuries
- Reduced absenteeism and cover by overtime or use of external labour

## Guidance currently available

- The HSE Web site <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm> provides a lot of guidance. Including guidance for rehabilitation <http://www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence/index.htm>

When undertaking a Risk Assessment of a manual handling operation, think about the following:

**T Task;** What is to be done; is it repetitive; does it require carrying for a distance?

**I Individual;** We all have different capabilities particular risk when undertaking a task for the first time e.g. temporary staff

**L Load;** What is the size, centre of gravity and shape of the load?

**E Environment;** Is it cold, hot; is the area cluttered or clear of hazards? etc.

Remember pulling and pushing as well as lifting.

Make use of the HSE manual handling charts.

In 2007, the theme of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work was focused on preventing work-related MSDs. The resulting Good Practice booklet is downloadable from <http://osha.europa.eu/publications/reports/TE7606536ENC>

## Good practice currently available

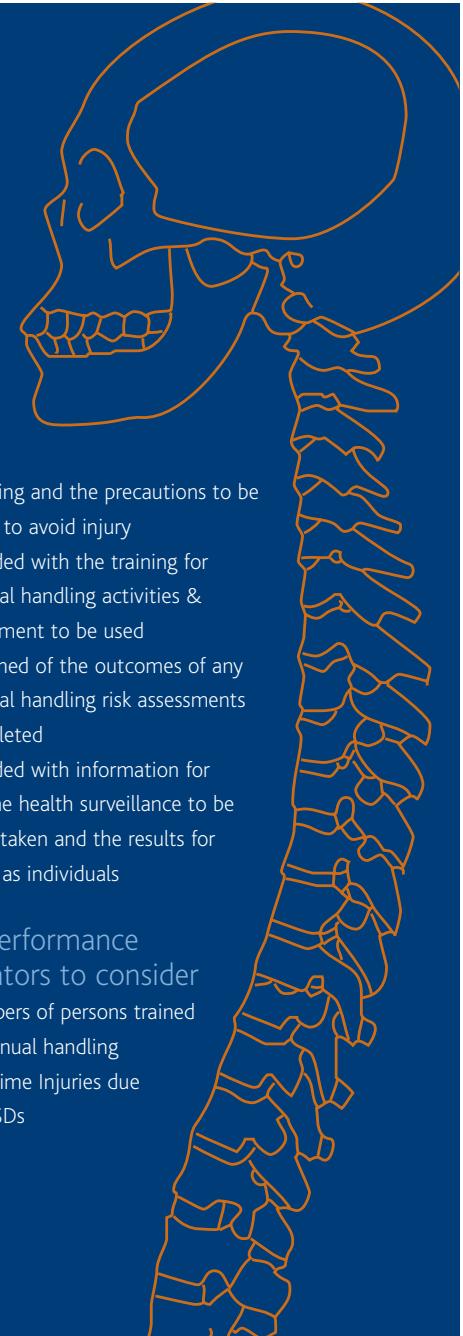
Make good use of manual handling aids such as:

- Forklift trucks, Telehandlers, powered trolleys, adjustable height devices
- Non powered trolley aids
- Conveyors, rollers
- Electric hoists, travelling hoists
- Training
- Promotion of a health lifestyle for the workforce

## Training/Toolbox talks

Employees and contractors will need to be:

- Informed of the tasks and activities that present a risk from manual



handling and the precautions to be taken to avoid injury

- Provided with the training for manual handling activities & equipment to be used
- Informed of the outcomes of any manual handling risk assessments completed
- Provided with information for routine health surveillance to be undertaken and the results for them as individuals

## Key Performance indicators to consider

- Numbers of persons trained in manual handling
- Lost time Injuries due to MSDs