

Project Name: Manual Handling Improvement Project

Manual Handling is a high risk activity in Network Rail due to many of our employees having to undertake manual handling tasks using heavy and / or awkward equipment and materials in often difficult conditions. Today, manual handling is the second highest cause of lost time injuries (LTIs) and many of our practices have not kept pace with risk reduction developed in other industries.

The Manual Handling Improvement Project is reducing risk of injury to our employees that can result when lifting or moving heavy and or awkward equipment, including the materials needed to complete the task. This work enables Network Rail to be compliant with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) (MHOR)

The main deliverables are:

- *Prioritised manual handling risk assessments conducted for heavy items.*
- *Elimination of certain activities.*
- *Develop of a catalogue of manual handling aids.*
- *Local and national improvements plans introduced across the business.*
- *Risk awareness training and communications to promote safer behaviour.*

At least 20 % of all LTIs to our people are caused by manual handling. In addition, a build-up of effects over time from moving heavy loads can lead to long-lasting health problems.

Further development of improved manual handling solutions will reduce the potential for both immediate and longer term harm. Risky manual handling activities are not, and never should be, “just part of the job”. We all need to understand how to reduce manual handling risks and plan to eliminate them. Elimination of the task altogether will have the biggest impact supported by mechanising handling activities and the adoption of lighter equipment and materials. This is our strategy.

What has been delivered?

- *84 high priority risk assessments carried out for heavy items in maintenance and works delivery.*
- *The process of prohibiting the manual lifting of rail over six metres in length is in progress.*
- *Developed a level crossing power pack trolley to remove the need to manually handle the 40kg power pack.*

- *Two Makinex Easy Lift 140 (EL140) are being trialled at Basingstoke Delivery Unit. The EL140 is a hand crane designed to be used in depots and workshop environments, it's a one person operation, enabling items up to 140kg to be safely lifted in instances such as onto work benches, or in or out of a vehicle, reducing the risk of back injuries and accidents.*

What are the business benefits?

The business benefits are improved wellbeing of our staff, reductions in LTIs and long term absence or incapacity. It is also likely that the musculoskeletal damage caused by poor manual handling significantly affects our staff, making them prone to injury outside of work. Tackling such sources of harm for our staff at source is expected to provide a powerful message that the business is committed to improving their health and safety.

Who is benefitting from the project?

The biggest benefits will be to our maintenance, works delivery and operations staff on the frontline that have to handle the materials, tools and products needed to complete work trackside, in our depots and at our stations. However, as we may all have to carry or move items in our day-to-day lives, we are all at risk of manual handling injury, and this project is a benefit to our workforce, wherever they work.

