

RISK ASSESSMENT · UNITED KINGDOM · 2026

Manual Handling Risk Assessment

UK template for a Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR) assessment — TILE / TILEO, MAC tool, guideline weights.

A manual handling risk assessment under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR, as amended) is required where manual handling cannot reasonably be avoided. It is one of the most under-done documents in UK construction because the activities are routine — but musculoskeletal disorders remain the single largest source of lost-time injury in the construction sector, and HSE inspectors increasingly target MHOR compliance on routine inspections.

Document structure a reviewer expects

- 1. Task and frequency**
What is lifted / carried / pushed / pulled, how often, by how many people, distance and duration.
- 2. Avoidance check (MHOR reg 4(1)(a))**
Mechanical aids considered and rejected — sack trucks, pallet trucks, vacuum lifters, hoists, conveyors — with justification.
- 3. Task analysis (T)**
Posture, lifting / lowering heights, distance carried, twisting, frequency, recovery time between lifts.
- 4. Individual analysis (I)**
Operative capability, training records, vulnerability factors (pregnancy, recent MSD, age).
- 5. Load analysis (L)**
Weight, size, stability, grip, sharp edges, temperature, contents shifting in transit.
- 6. Environment analysis (E)**
Floor surface (gradient, smooth / rough, contamination), space (clear access route), lighting, temperature, weather.
- 7. MAC tool score (if applicable)**
MAC, V-MAC or RAPP score with colour band (green / amber / red / purple) and date of assessment.
- 8. Controls applied**
Mechanical aids in use, team lifting protocol, lift zone delivery, route clearance, rest intervals.
- 9. Training and review**
INDG143-compliant training records, task-specific briefing, review trigger and date.

Common reasons reviewers reject this document

- No avoidance step — assessment skips straight to controls without considering mechanical aids.
- TILE / TILEO structure not followed — assessment is a paragraph of generic text.
- MAC tool score missing for loads above the guideline weight, or score recorded without the date.
- Guideline weights referenced as absolute limits rather than triggers for further assessment.

- Generic manual handling training cited — not specific to the loads (plasterboard, kerbstones, manhole covers) actually handled.
- Vulnerability factors (pregnancy, MSD history) not considered in the Individual section.
- Assessment dated more than 12 months ago with no review record and no trigger event.

UK regulation reference

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) SI 1992/2793

The statutory framework — avoid / assess / reduce duty for manual handling operations.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2793/contents/made>

L23 — Manual handling — Guidance on Regulations HSE L23

The principal guidance — TILE structure, guideline weights, assessment methodology.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l23.htm>

INDG143 — Manual handling at work HSE INDG143

Plain-English summary; standard reference for operative training content.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.htm>

HSE MAC tool — Manual handling Assessment Chart HSE MAC

The standard scoring tool for loads above the guideline weight; outputs colour-banded scores that drive intervention.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/>

Frequently asked questions

Is 25 kg the legal lifting limit in the UK?

No. 25 kg is an HSE guideline figure for a man lifting close to the body at waist height with the load in front — it is not a legal limit. The legal duty under MHOR is to reduce risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Lifts above the guideline weight, or in awkward postures, trigger a more detailed assessment (typically using the MAC tool), not an automatic prohibition.

What does TILE stand for in manual handling?

Task, Individual, Load, Environment — the four areas an HSE-compliant manual handling risk assessment must cover. Some employers use TILEO with an added 'Other factors' category for things like PPE constraints or shift patterns. The framework comes from HSE L23, the official MHOR guidance.

When do I need to use the MAC tool?

Where the lift exceeds the L23 guideline weight for the relevant zone, where the task involves repetitive lifting, or where the assessor needs a structured scoring method to evaluate controls. The MAC outputs a colour-banded score (green / amber / red / purple) that drives the intervention priority.

Do I need a separate assessment for each load?

Not per individual item, but per task type. Carrying plasterboard sheets is one task; lifting manhole covers is another; pushing wheeled bins is a third (and would use the RAPP tool, not the MAC). The assessment is task-specific, not item-specific.

Who can carry out a manual handling risk assessment?

A competent person — typically a supervisor or safety officer with HSE-compliant training, or an external occupational health / ergonomics specialist for complex assessments. There is no formal certification scheme, but the HSE expects the assessor to have working knowledge of L23, the MAC tool, and the specific tasks being assessed.

Need a finished version of this document?

Riskora generates a sign-off ready risk assessment in about 5 minutes — UK-aligned, hierarchy of controls baked in, versioned and exportable. Free 7-day trial at riskora.cloud.

© Riskora. This template structure is provided for guidance only and is not a substitute for competent-person review under MHSWR 1999 and CDM 2015. Always tailor to site-specific conditions before issuing for work.