

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Guide to the manual handling of plasterboard audit tool

The manual handling of plasterboard campaign is part of the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) manual load handling at construction workplaces project. The purpose of the project is to reduce the incidence of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) in construction workplaces in Queensland due to manual tasks. The majority of these musculoskeletal injuries are caused by manual tasks such as lifting, carrying or putting down objects. The project also aims to raise awareness of the legislative obligations of all those involved, from the design of the materials and structure through to the installation of the plasterboard.

The plasterboard campaign audits will focus on hazardous manual tasks and slips, trips and falls when handling plasterboard and other sheet materials, specifically at the:

- delivery location
- on site storage
- handling and installation.

The first section of the guide collects key demographic and workplace information including particulars for the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) that is the subject of the assessment. The details recorded should match those that would ordinarily be recorded for an enforcement notice. The site and office location details will be used to categorise the data geographically. The contact details obtained are for the inspector's use where further contact is required with the worksite.

Questions 1 to 27 are about risk assessment, induction, training and consultation followed by the site assessment of a manual plasterboard/sheet material handling activity.

Questions 28 to 33 gather information about the supply chain and upstream obligation holders.

A number of the audit questions include reference(s) to the work health and safety legislation, in particular the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (WHS Act 2011), part 4.2 of the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (WHS Regulation 2011) and the [Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011](#). These references are included to provide guidance for both inspectors and duty holders. A 'no' response to a question does not necessarily mean that it is a non-compliance.

The appendices include more detailed information about manual task risk management and handling plasterboard. This higher level of detail is for the inspectors and interested duty holders. It includes risk management strategies, common sources of risk and risk control ideas.

Audit questions

Q1. The inspector will determine if the PCBU has a specific procedure/risk assessment for handling plasterboard. A risk assessment and documentation are not mandatory.

You should carry out a risk assessment for any manual tasks that you have identified as being hazardous, unless the risk is well-known and you know how to control it.

A risk assessment can help you determine:

- which postures, movements and forces of the task pose a risk
- where during the task they pose a risk
- why they are occurring and what needs to be fixed.

(Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011).

Q2. The inspector will determine if the PCBU has identified the manual tasks risk factors as described in the *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011* (repetitive or sustained force; high or sudden force; repetitive movement; sustained and/or awkward posture; duration; hand/arm or whole body vibration). The inspector will ask for verification from the workers and in larger organisations, ask to view documentation.

Q3. The information about how workers are paid may be relevant as a contributing source of risk as the financial remuneration method may have a negative impact on the way the tasks and safety elements are performed. That is, the workers may work faster or without breaks in order to get the job done quickly and therefore earn more. The inspector will ask workers about the impact of the remuneration method on their work.

The systems of work, or the way work is organised, can influence the physical and mental demands that a manual task places on a worker.

(Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011).

Questions 4 to 7 are linked to the primary duty to 'provide information, training, instruction or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to health and safety arising from work carried out as part of the business or undertaking'.

(WHS Act 2011 s19 (3) (f) and WHS Regulation 2011 r39)

Q4. The inspector will determine if the PCBU provides an induction to workers and contractors that includes information about manual tasks. This is not mandatory but it is one way that the PCBU can inform workers about the hazardous manual tasks on the job. The inspector will verify with the workers and in larger organisations, ask to view documentation. Documentation is not mandatory.

Q5. The inspector will determine if the PCBU provides manual tasks training to workers and contractors based on the *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011*. The inspector will verify

with the workers and in larger organisations, ask to view documentation. Documentation is not mandatory.

Q6. The inspector will determine if the manual tasks training is based solely on lifting techniques, for example training for workers that teaches workers to bend their knees and keep their back straight. The research evidence shows that providing lifting technique training such as this is not effective in minimising the risk of injury from hazardous manual tasks.

Q7. The inspector will determine if workers are supervised to ensure that safe work procedures are followed. The inspector will ask for verification from the workers. If the answer is no, the inspector will ask the workers and supervisor what the barriers to supervision are (for example, “too busy”) and document this information on the audit tool.

Consultation

Q8. The inspector will determine if the workers are consulted regarding hazardous manual tasks and what they are consulted about.

If yes, tick all that are relevant. The inspector will verify with the workers and in larger organisations, ask to view documentation. If the response is no, the inspector will go to Q9.
(WHS Act 2011 s46-48).

Consultation with workers and their health and safety representatives is necessary at each step of the risk management process.

(Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011).

Q9. Only answer this question, if answered no to Q8.

If workers are not consulted about their hazardous manual tasks, the inspector will ask the workers if they know what consultation mechanisms are in place, if any. For example tool box talks, meetings, or a participative ergonomics programme. The inspector will verify by asking what these mechanisms are and in larger organisations, view documentation.

Task assessment 1

Q10. Record the plasterboard handling task that will be the focus of the assessment. The inspector will assess the task of handling other sheet materials if no plasterboard handling tasks are being performed at the time of the inspector visit. Tasks that might be assessed include:

- handling of plasterboard/sheet material on or off truck to storage area
- handling of plasterboard/sheet material elsewhere on site
- installing plasterboard/sheet material onto wall
- installing plasterboard/sheet material onto ceiling
- handling of other sheet material. The inspector will list the details of the task including the type of sheet material for example glass/ mirrors/bench tops/sheet metal etc. and where it is being handled.

Q11. The inspector will record the type of plasterboard or other sheet material handled i.e.:

- Standard plasterboard
- Fire rated

- Cement fibre
- Other (glass/mirrors/bench tops/sheet metal etc.). Record the type of “other” sheet material handled in the space provided.

Questions 12 to 16: The inspector will be assessing the plasterboard handling task identified. The appendices in the *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011* may be referenced during this process.

Q12. The inspector will identify if any of the following manual task risk factors are present:

- repetitive or sustained force
- repetitive movement
- sustained and/or awkward posture.

If the inspector has assessed the task as involving at least one of the above postures, movements or forces that are also repetitive (task performed two or more times per minute) and/or sustained (held for more than 30 seconds), then the inspector will determine the duration of the task.

Q13. The inspector will determine if the task is done for more than a total of two hours over a whole shift or continuously for more than 30 minutes at a time. If yes, then the task is a risk and risk control is required.

Q14. The inspector will identify if the manual task requires high or sudden force. If yes, then the task is a risk and risk control is required.

Q15. The inspector will identify if the task involves vibration. If yes, the task requires further investigation.

Refer to AS 2670.1-2001 and AS 2670.4-2001 for guidance. PCBUs and workers may also find the following handbook useful:

[*Bad Vibrations: A Handbook on Whole-Body Vibration Exposure in Mining*](#). Barbara McPhee, Gary Foster, Airdrie Long.

Coal Services Health and Safety Trust 2009.

Q16. Is there a risk of musculoskeletal disorder (i.e. the risk has not been controlled)?

If there was a ‘yes’ response to Q12 and Q13, or Q14, there is a risk of MSD - go to Q18. If there was a ‘no’ response to Q12 and Q13, or Q14, go to Q17.

A person conducting a business or undertaking must manage risks to health and safety relating to a musculoskeletal disorder associated with a hazardous manual task, in accordance with part 3.1.
(WHS Regulation 2011, r60)

Q17. What controls have been implemented for the hazardous manual task assessed?

This question relates only to controls that have been implemented on the site. Controls that were identified in the procedure/risk assessment but not implemented should not be recorded. Using the hierarchy of controls as a basis, the inspector will indicate what levels have been implemented to manage the risks associated with the task.

The inspector may ask the organisation to provide details of any innovative or effective controls that can be shared with industry.

Q18. What are the sources of the uncontrolled risk? Appendix 2 of the audit tool includes numerous examples of common sources of risk when handling plasterboard and risk control ideas.

The sources of risk will be the things that you may be able to change to eliminate or reduce the risk of MSD. For example, poor postures may be due to the layout of the workplace, high forces may be due to the loads being handled, and the frequency and duration of the task may be due to the work organisation, limited staff numbers or increased work pace to meet tight deadlines.

The main sources of risk are the:

- the nature, size, weight or number of things handled in performing the manual task
- with the design or layout of the work area
- the environment in which the manual task is performed
- with the systems of work.

(Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011)

Task assessment 2

Q19. Record the hazardous manual task that will be the focus of the assessment.

With task assessment 2, it is not mandatory to assess a plasterboard/sheet material handling task. If there are no manual tasks involving the handling of sheet material being performed, the inspector may assess a finishing task or other manual task instead.

Questions 19 to 25: The inspector will assess the second manual handling task identified, following the same process as for Task assessment 1.

Please see table below:

| | |
|--|------|
| Q 20 refer to | Q11 |
| Q 21 refer to | Q 12 |
| Q22 refer to | Q 13 |
| Q 23 refer to | Q14 |
| Q 24 refer to | Q 15 |
| Q 25. Is there a risk of musculoskeletal disorder (i.e. the risk has not been controlled)? | |
| If there is a 'yes' response to Q21 and 22, or Q23, there is a risk of MSD - go to Q27. If there was a 'no' response to Q 21 and Q22, or Q23, go to Q26. | |
| Q 26 refer to | Q 17 |
| Q 27 refer to | Q 18 |

Supply chain and upstream obligations

Q28 Does the builder managing the project have any work related MSD prevention initiatives specifically for hazardous manual tasks?

The inspector will ask the builder that is managing the project this question and determine what

preventative initiatives the builder has in place. Appendix 1 of the audit tool includes information about manual tasks risk management.

The following list is only a sample of what might be in place:

- Internal consultative processes supported and ongoing (participative ergonomics program, meetings, networks established to improve design related issues).
- A targeted number of higher order design controls implemented for each project e.g. lighter weight materials, mechanical aids and assistive devices, specific mechanical lifting aids for handling plasterboard/sheet material developed in collaboration with materials handling companies.
- Tendering criteria and contracts include requirements other than administrative controls for risk management of high risk manual tasks.
- Other manual task risk management initiatives.

Documentation is not mandatory. The inspector will ask for verification from the workers and in larger organisations, ask to view documentation.

This information is relevant to the management of risk. Gathering this information will provide WHSQ and industry with a better understanding of the types of hazardous manual tasks initiatives being implemented at worksites. .

Q29. Record who was responsible for the purchase of the plasterboard used at this site:

- Client
- Builder
- Subcontractor.

The inspector will ask the builder that is managing the project this question. This information is relevant to the supply chain and the management of risk.

Q30. The inspector will identify if the layout of the site (access, space, terrain, storage etc.) has been considered for the safe delivery and storage of materials.

The inspector will ask the builder that is managing the project this question and verify on site by inspecting the safe delivery and storage of plasterboard and other materials.

Q31. The inspector will identify if there been any consultation with the designer, manufacturer, or supplier about the risks to workers handling plasterboard as a result of the plasterboard specifications.

For example, consideration of the sheet size, weight, or gripability; provision of assistive devices specifically designed for improved plasterboard handling. The inspector will ask the builder that is managing the project and if the answer is 'yes', details will be obtained of the outcomes of the consultation. This information will be recorded in the *additional observations and enforcement action* box.

This information is relevant to the management of risk and the supply chain interaction.

(WHS Act 2011 s19, s22 and WHS Regulation r60, r61, r297).

Q32. The inspector will identify if there been any consultation with the designer or client about the risks to workers as a result of the design of the building/work area when handling, installing, and finishing plasterboard.

For example, the majority of joins are between hip and shoulder height to reduce above shoulder and below hip work; work space has been considered for the use of assistive devices or mechanical aides between rooms or work areas. The inspector will ask the builder that is managing the project and if the answer is 'yes', details of the outcomes of the consultation will be obtained. This information will be recorded in the *additional observations and enforcement action* box.

This information is relevant to the management of risk and the supply chain interaction.

(WHS Act 2011 s19, s22 and WHS Regulation 2011 r60, r61, r294, r297).

Q33. The inspector will identify if the supplier did a pre-delivery screening and/or site risk assessment.

This is relevant to assessments taking place during the delivery phase only. The inspector will ask the delivery driver this question in relation to how the hazardous manual task of handling plasterboard is managed during unloading and movement on site. The supplier screening may be done by phone, on site or another method. Inspectors may not be able to gain this information during other phases of the project.

Additional observations and enforcement action

The inspector will record in this section enforcement action taken, relevant details from Q32 and Q33 and other observations noted while on site.

Key resources for construction workplaces

The following resources as well as the audit tool and guide can be found on the WHSQ web site: www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

- [*Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011*](#)
- [*How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2011*](#)
- [*Preventing injuries from handling plasterboard brochure*](#)
- [PERforM](#) package, including No Sprains, Big Gains DVD
- [*Guide to Work Health and Safety Act 2011*](#)
- [*Slips, trips and falls brochure*](#)
- [*Zero Harm at Work Leadership Program*](#).

Appendix 1: Manual tasks risk management – duty holder responsibilities

It is important that the duty holder has a stance on reducing manual task related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) through management commitment and a risk management approach.

Below is a list of MSD prevention initiatives specifically for hazardous manual tasks (HMT) in small businesses and medium and large organisations.

Small business

The duty holder:

- has operational procedures for controlling work related MSD
- stated and supports that it is a health and safety priority and controlling HMT is entrenched in the workplace culture as standard practice
- ensures that the work and materials are planned and coordinated to reduce the risks when handling plasterboard
- consults workers about manual task hazard identification and risk control development and implementation
- sets time aside for worker participation in discussions about managing manual task risks.

Medium and large organisations

The duty holder:

- has a HMT policy and procedures that are aligned to the HMT regulation and code of practice and are known and understood by management, workers and contractors
- has specifically identified or targeted HMT in the health and safety management and planning processes
- has consultative processes in place targeting manual tasks. For example:
 - consultative networks determined to improve design related issues in supply chain; plant and materials; structures (buildability)
 - consults with designers/specifiers, manufacturer and suppliers especially about the risks to workers handling plasterboard.
- specifies for optimal material choice (consideration of sheet size/weight) and safe installation processes for example joins between hip and shoulder height wherever possible
- uses positive performance indicators to drive MSD prevention strategies
- ensures that supervisors and managers are actively involved in leading manual tasks risk management processes
- ensures that resources are dedicated to supporting manual task risk management. For example:
 - there are people with sufficient ergonomics expertise in key roles within the organisation.
 - allocates and expends funds for equipment, design solutions and maintenance
 - improves human resources processes where these impact on manual task risks – job design, staffing levels, work organisation, work practices, work hours, shifts.
- ensure manual tasks information available in a variety of formats, appropriate to the size of the organisation. For example noticeboards, posters, tool box talks, meetings, newsletters, health and safety representatives, one-on-one communication, electronic.
- ensure manual task risk management uses an evidence based approach.

With regard to workers, the duty holder ensures:

- workers are consulted about manual task hazard identification and risk control development and implementation
- their views are taken into account
- they are involved in decisions, equipment, purchase and developing safety procedures
- they are involved in trialling and reviewing manual tasks solutions before a final decision or purchase
- there is documentation that supports these processes.

Appendix 2: Sources of risk and control ideas

Following are some common sources of risk and ideas for how to control these risks.

1. Source of risk: The nature, size, weight or number of things handled in performing the manual task

- Size of the plasterboard/sheet material and weight of the plasterboard/sheet material:
 - standard 10 mm x 1.350 x 4.8 weighs 42-44kg
 - standard 10 mm x 1.350 x 6 weighs 52.65kg
 - fire rated products are heavier, for example 13mm thick 1.2 x 4.8 m sheets weighs 60.5kg.
- Difficulty gripping the plasterboard/sheet material.
- Fragile/slippery/unstable/unwieldy plasterboard and/or sheet material.
- No handles or lifting lugs.
- Frequent lifting and carrying.

Control ideas (Note: refer to the sections 5 and 6 of the appendix for additional control ideas)

- Building design/specifications allow for optimal material choice and easy installation. For example:
 - lighter, easier to handle materials selected
 - consideration of sheet size/weight and ease of handling with a mechanical aid
 - the majority of joins are between hip and shoulder height to reduce above shoulder and below hip work
 - work space considered for use of assistive devices or mechanical aides between rooms or work areas.
- Packs and single sheets labelled or come with easily accessed information about the size, weight and information about the safe handling of the packs and single sheets.
- Job specific runs of product are ordered when possible. For example, higher but shorter sheets. This helps reduce the manual handling risks and also the wastage and the associated waste handling.
- Mechanical aids and assistive devices are provided and used. For example:
 - a powered plasterboard trolley and specific vacuum lifter is used in commercial settings
 - a pneumatic or manual sheet lifter for all ceiling work and to assist in sheet placement onto walls
 - adjustable ceiling prop used to alleviate the burden associated with holding the board above head height.
- Specific mechanical lifting aids and assistive devices for handling plasterboard/sheet material developed in collaboration with materials handling companies.

2. Source of risk: Work area design and layout

A work area that is designed without consideration of the risks that arise from hazardous manual tasks may impose awkward postures on workers undertaking manual tasks, for example, bent and twisted positions with shoulders raised and the need to reach for items or carry loads over long distances.

Specifically problems with work area design and layout may include:

- Materials not stored close to where the work is being done.
- Lack of space and site congestion thus:

- reducing the ability to use mechanical aids
- more frequent handling of sheets.
- Rough, uneven surfaces - may increase the exertion required to perform manual tasks due to difficulty maintaining stability and may increase friction when moving objects such as trolleys.
- Design/specifications not considered regarding handling and installation of plasterboard.

Control ideas

- Designated delivery and storage area.
- Delivery vehicle able to get in close to delivery point
- Safe unobstructed access for unloading and ease of handling (plant, scaffold, equipment, other materials and trades not obstructing access or ability to use mechanical aids).
- Adequate space to perform tasks and use mechanical aids safely.
- Height and depth of storage appropriate for weight, loads and frequency of access.
- Level surface:
 - level smooth pathways
 - clear path to manoeuvre equipment or manually carry sheets
 - changes in surface heights are ramped.
- Layout reorganisation to reduce carry distances.
- Joins eliminated or minimised below hip height and above shoulder height.

3. Source of risk: Systems of work

Problems with job design may include:

- poor communication and co-ordination of workflow on site resulting in congestion of trades and materials
- tight timeframes
- workers not consulted about hazardous manual tasks or given an opportunity to participate in the risk management process for hazardous manual tasks
- no planning about how the loads are handled
- manual tasks training relies solely on lifting technique training for example “bend your knees and keep your back straight” type training
- little worker influence over workload or work methods
- insufficient staff
- work for extended hours of work (any work that is more than 8 hours a day and/or more than 6 days a week)
- shift work
- work which requires sustained mental or physical effort
- work without adequate rest breaks (varies with the task)
- tools and equipment not regularly maintained.

Control ideas

- Good communication and co-ordination of workflow. For example:
 - plasterboard delivered to level of work to reduce double handling
 - distribution of plasterboard around the worksite close to where the sheets are being used
 - no congestion of materials and trades
 - timeframes reasonable.
- Staff provided with manual task training based on *Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011*.

- Workers are consulted and participate in all stages of the manual tasks risk management process including:
 - hazard identification
 - risk assessment
 - controls development and implementation
 - purchasing equipment
 - development of safety procedures
 - trialling and reviewing manual tasks solutions before a final decision or purchase.
- Participative ergonomics programme implemented and embedded in existing OHS systems to ensure its sustainability within the organisation.
- Workers are multi-skilled and task specialisation is avoided to allow workers task variety. For example rotation from screw gun use to other installation tasks (e.g. measuring, cutting, applying tape, joint compound, sanding, and installing panels).
- Sufficient staff and supervision to ensure tasks are done safely.
- Work pace and hours of work not excessive.
- Other site hazards have been effectively managed, for example excavations barricaded.
- All equipment for example tools, trolleys, EPJs etc are included on a preventative maintenance schedule.

4. Source of risk: Environment in which the manual task is performed

- Wet weather/humidity
- Wind (e.g. open areas)
- Heat/UV (e.g. unloading in Summer)
- Lighting (e.g. indoor/outdoor transition)
- Housekeeping – obstructions, congestion
- Slippery floor surfaces.

Control ideas

- Temperature and humidity reduced in hot and humid conditions where possible.
- Exposure to windy conditions reduced by:
 - planning the route of work through protected pathways
 - use of vehicles and mechanical aids to transport items in outdoor conditions
 - coordinate outdoor tasks during low wind conditions.
- Lighting provided to suit the task performed.
- Work areas clean, tidy and free of clutter or obstacles prevents workers from adopting awkward postures and reduces the level of exertion that may be required to reach over or around obstacles.
- Clean, smooth and flat surfaces can also reduce forces required to push and pull objects and prevent slips, trips and falls.

5. Delivery and storage

Source of risk:

- No pre-delivery screening or site assessment.
- Congestion of trades and materials on site.

No/poor:

- Planning and co-ordination of the delivery of materials by builder/site foreman/ supervisor and supplier.

- Access and housekeeping.
- Designated storage area.
- Use of mechanical aids or assistive devices during unloading and storage.

Control ideas

Site prepared and ready for delivery and storage, including:

- Pre-delivery screening and inspection done when needed to determine safe unloading and handling of plasterboard at site.
- Delivery of materials been planned and co-ordinated.
- Delivery vehicle has lifting attachment such as hiab or vehicle mounted hoist.
- Mechanical aids such as hoists, telehandlers and conveyors available and used for movement to point of storage.
- Suppliers and trades are co-ordinated on site, for example determining who is to be at site and when to avoid congestion of trades and materials.
- Safe unobstructed access for unloading and ease of handling. For example plant, scaffold, equipment, other materials and trades not obstructing access.
- Access routes created (e.g. through floors or external openings) for the movement of plasterboard/sheet material.
- Loads are stored and handled as close to point of use as practicable.
- Loads are stored to facilitate ease of access and minimal manual handling.
- Plasterboard sheets are stored in a way that reduces the manual task and falling risks. For example store sheets close to vertical in a cradle or racking system which is suitably designed, restrained and secured. If sheets are stored close to vertical the rack needs to be designed so that the sheets cannot fall on workers (i.e. the rack allows the sheets to lean on an angle or there is a physical restraint to prevent sheets falling over).
- If sheets are stored horizontally, consider if they can they be raised off the ground to reduce manual handling below knee height.
- Loads secured from uncontrolled movement; and re-secured after sheets have been removed.
- Enough workers to manually carry sheets safely (least preferred option). Team lifting should not be considered an adequate long-term control. Team lifting has inherent risks and alternative solutions should be considered.

Contingencies provided for e.g.:

- supported process for delivery driver when site deemed unsafe to deliver
- delivery caters for wet days.

6. Handling and installation on site

Source of risk:

- Design/specifications not considered regarding handling and installation of plasterboard:
 - heavy, oversized sheets for example fire rated product manually handled
 - flooring not engineered for use of suitable mechanical aids (commercial)
 - complex design requiring of multiple areas of low joins or high joins and ceilings
 - lack of space and site congestion
 - reduced ability to use mechanical aids
 - more frequent handling of sheets.
- Materials not stored close to where the work is being done.
- Site congestion of material and trades.

- Lack of space.
- Mechanical aids not used.
- Rough, uneven surfaces - may increase the exertion required to perform manual tasks due to difficulty maintaining stability and may increase friction when moving objects such as trolleys.
- Poor housekeeping.

Control ideas

- Building design/specifications allow for optimal material choice (consideration of sheet size/weight) and ease of installation. For example:
 - lighter, easier to handle materials selected
 - consideration of sheet size/weight and ease of handling with a mechanical aid
 - the majority of joints are between hip and shoulder height to reduce above shoulder and below hip work
 - work space considered for use of assistive devices or mechanical aides between rooms or work areas.
- Tools selected which reduce the manual handling risks for example plasterboard ceiling prop, sheet lifter, spring loaded swivel mud box, mechanical sander.
- Work area layout reorganised to reduce carry distances.
- Level surface:
 - level smooth pathways
 - easy to push trolley/other aid
 - clear path to manoeuvre equipment or manually carry sheets
 - changes in surface heights are ramped.
- Good housekeeping:
 - reduced leads of floor due to overhead electrical connections/battery operated power tools.
- Enough workers to manually carry sheets safely (least preferred option).

Installation and finishing controls:

- Suitable mechanical aids and assistive devices selected and used to install materials for example a plasterboard powered trolley and specific vacuum lifter is used in commercial settings.
- A pneumatic or manual sheet lifter for all ceiling work and to assist in sheet placement on to walls
- Adjustable ceiling prop used to alleviate the burden associated with holding the board above head height.
- Lighter, easier to handle materials selected.
- Lightweight well designed tools used.
- Mechanical devices (mud box or pneumatic tools) used during finishing tasks.
- When screwing plasterboard onto ceilings an auto-feeding screw gun with a handle extension used.
- Tools are cordless to reduce the trip/fall hazard.
- Enough workers to manually carry sheets safely (least preferred option) and to assist with tasks where required.

7. Cutting

Source of risk:

- The cutting of plasterboard/sheet material is done in awkward/sustained postures due to the work area layout and design, the systems of work, the nature, size, weight or number of things handled and/or the work environment.

Control ideas

- Duty holder consulted with contractors and suppliers regarding optimal dimensions of plasterboard/sheet material size and weights to reduce the amount of cutting required.
- There is no cutting of boards on the edge.
- Work benches and trestles available and used.
- Score and snap cutting technique used.

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