

Xstrata Copper Australia – Mount Isa Operations

Manual Handling - Reducing Injuries

INTRODUCTION

Manual handling describes an activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing. Tasks involved can vary from keyboard use to carrying a box to handling large pieces of equipment.

Injuries due to poor manual handling techniques are the most common and most costly category of work-related injuries, accounting for over 40% of injuries within Xstrata Copper Australia Mount Isa operations. Many employees suffer painful injuries while performing manual handling tasks. The most common injuries due to manual handling are back injuries, sprains and strains and Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS). The costs of these manual-handling injuries, average \$11 000 per Disabling Injury ⁽¹⁾, are enormous in human, financial and social terms to the employee, employer and the Mount Isa community.

In order for preventative occupational health and safety measures to be successfully implemented and maintained, policies and activities, such as an effective Manual Handling audit tool, need to be integrated into existing operational safety management systems and not simply added as an appendix or afterthought. The adoption and adaptation of the Queensland Manual Tasks Advisory Standard 2000 have achieved this.

There is a strong link between Occupational Health and Safety, productivity and employee / employer relations. Improved OHS practices have key benefits for employers and employees. These include an improved industrial relations climate due to greater consultation, a safer and healthier working environment for employees and substantial savings in workers' compensation and rehabilitation costs (Xstrata Copper Australia is a self-insurer). Organisational management systems, which are OHS inclusive, provide a framework for change and support long term improvements in work practices, in turn providing a safe work environment and safe systems of work.

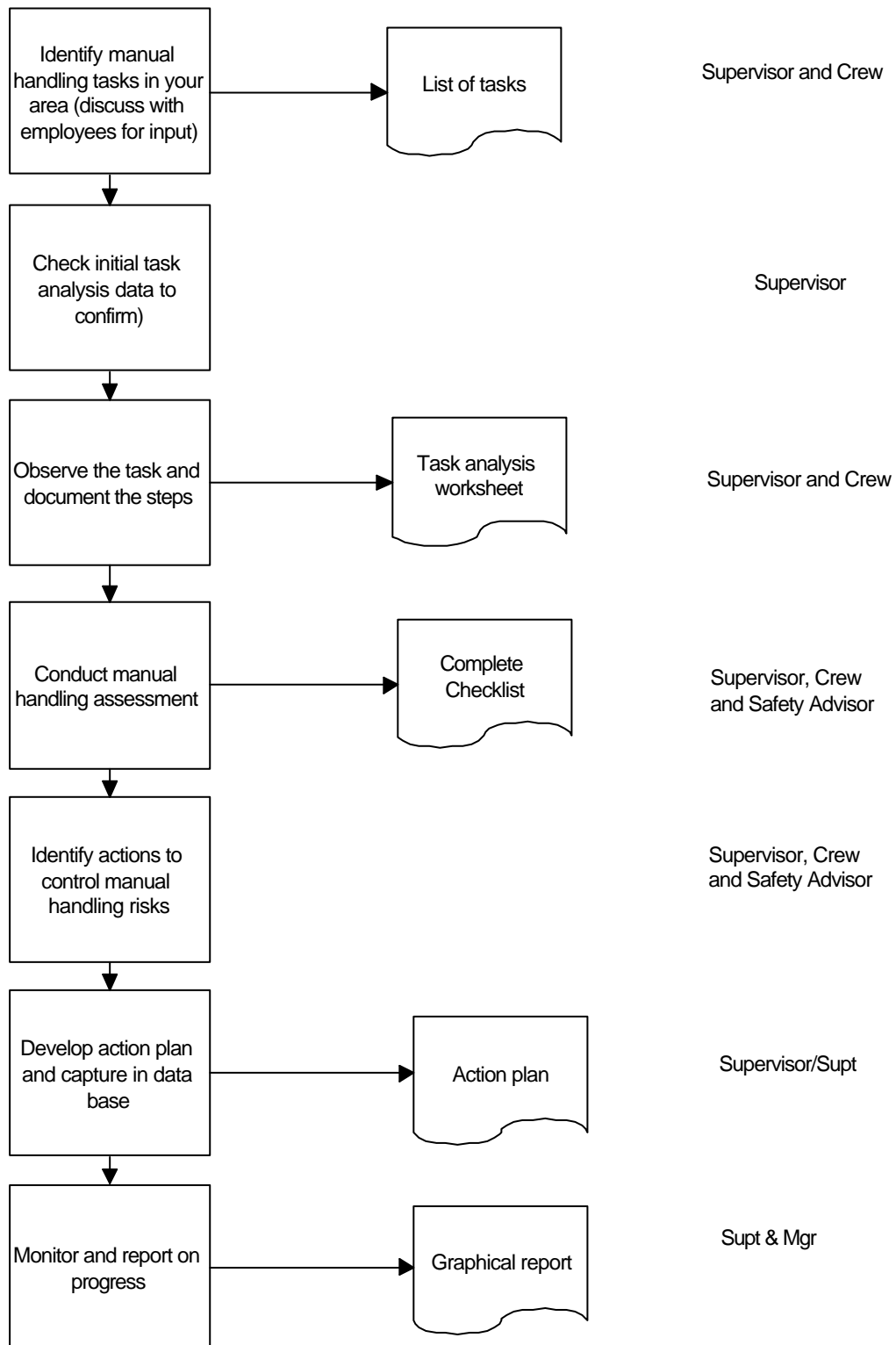
Employees who perform manual handling tasks are familiar with the risks and difficulties they face. The people actually doing the jobs will have ideas about safer and more efficient ways to do the task. Tapping into the employees' knowledge is more likely to achieve an acceptable and lasting solution. It is imperative employees and/or their representative should be consulted, as was the case at Mount Isa, through the whole process of risk identification, assessment and control.

(1) Calculations based on random selection of Mount Isa operations Metallurgical Plants data.

PROGRAM

The Manual Handling program was first introduced to the operation in July 2002 under the guidance of Maryann Wipaki (Safety Adviser Xstrata Copper Australia Mount Isa Operations). Transport operations – Mobile Fleet Workshop was identified as a major high-risk area for manual handling injuries, therefore efforts were concentrated in this area in the first instance and later extended to include Supply and Contracts operations on both the surface and underground environments. The following process was followed:

Manual Handling Process



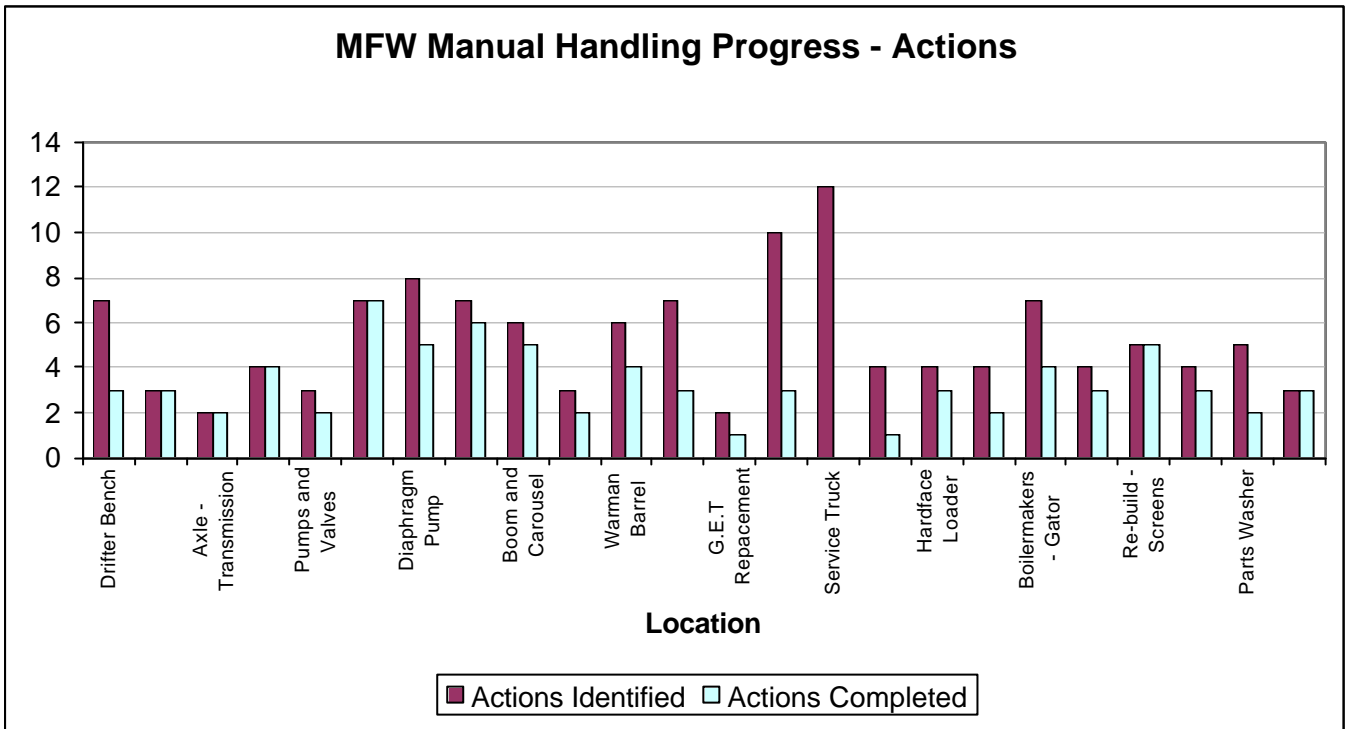
Cover page: Manual Handling Checklist(s)

Department		Location	
Assessor		Date of Assessment	
Task			
Task Duration (eg 3 hrs/day)			
Checklist Complete Yes/No (please attach)			
Criteria		Desired Score	Actual Score
Working Posture		27	
Repetition and Design		13	
Vibration		16	
Work Area Design		12	
Hand Tool Use		17	
Nature of Loads		15	
Load Handling		15	
Individual Factors		13	
Organisational Factors		14	
Actions (using the recommended controls listed with the checklist)		Responsible Person	Due Date

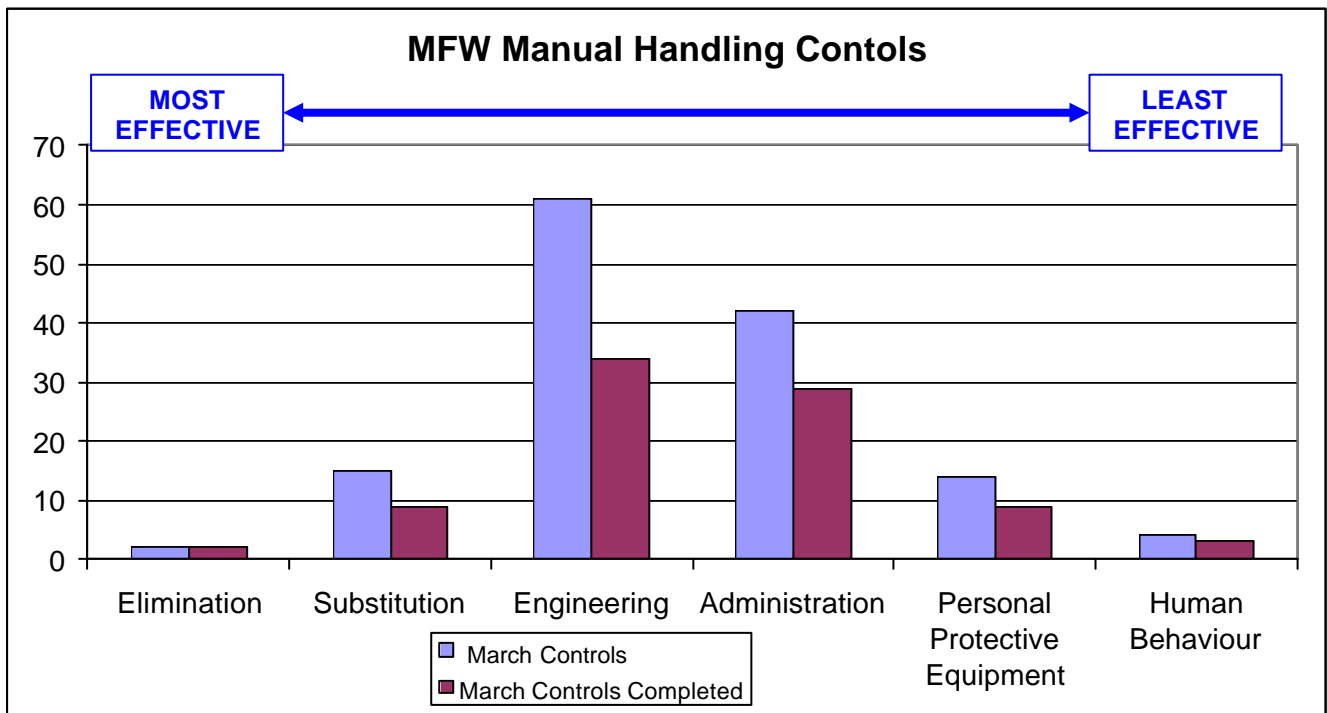
The audit document consists of a series of checklists; subject heading listed in the table above. A series of questions are asked and a point is awarded for a response to a predetermined preferred answer, for each question. If a preferred answer is not given, generally a problem area has been identified, further investigation is needed and appropriate controls implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk.

Checklist(s) is available in the Queensland Manual Tasks Advisory Standard 2000

Monitoring of Program Progression



Positive performance indicator used to monitor actions completed versus actions identified



When determining suitable controls for Manual Handling risks, the Hierarchy of Controls is used with emphases on achieving the most effective measure appropriate to the task.

Manual Handling Improvements

Pallet racking for transporting underground Toyota tyres

Before



After



High potential risk of back injuries occurring when attempting to lift tyres from the storage cage.

Solution: Re-design cage for ease of access (Roll in / Roll Out)

Gallagher Pump Stand

Before



After



Gallagher pump required repair work performed at ground level creating high potential muscle strain / injury environment.

Solution: Design and fabricate purpose built stand to accommodate pump at workable height.

THE FUTURE

CONTINUED EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Continued evaluation and review is necessary in order to:

- Make sure that the changes are adopted correctly.
- Be certain that the changes help reduce risk of injury.
- Check if changes need further improvement or modifications.
- Make sure that the changes are not causing other problems.

Over a given time period the program will be introduced to the remaining sectors of the operation. It is envisaged that future developments will take place in improving design concepts, technology and work practices across the company. It is important that each of the workplaces within the operation take into account these changes as appropriate. The process of evaluation and reassessment and control of manual handling risks is an ongoing process.

TARGET: “ZERO INJURIES”