

A guide to safe manual lifting and handling in construction

Over the coming months, The HSE are carrying out thousands of visits to construction sites to ensure that workers are safely moving heavy or bulky materials.

To manage the risks from manual handling, The Manual Handling Regulations suggest:

- Avoiding hazardous manual handling operations, ‘so far as reasonably practicable’.
- Assessing the risk of injury to workers from any hazardous manual handling that can’t be avoided.
- Reducing the risk of injury to workers from hazardous manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable.
-

In this article, we have recommended equipment for the highest risk jobs on a construction site from the HSE’s risk band table, to help you stay ahead of any inspection, avoid workplace injuries and increase productivity.

Blocks

A repetitive task, with on average 30 lifts an hour, block lifting is typically carried out by a single person and is deemed a high risk by HSE once the blocks weigh 35kg or more. This sort of lifting work cannot be avoided entirely, but there are pieces of handling equipment, such as Chain Slings, that can reduce lifting and lowering risk.

If you need to move blocks in bulk, then a Block Grab Attachment for an excavator or crane with a net will increase efficiency and eliminate the need for repetitive movement. It’s worth noting that using plant equipment does also carry extra risk.

Concrete paving slabs

Awkward sizing and heavy weight make laying concrete paving slabs high risk according to the HSE. Whilst one person should not be lifting alone, even with two the risk is quite substantial. Our Battery Powered Vacuum Lifter is hand operated, so it doesn’t require plant machinery, and allows for precise positioning of concrete slabs.

The Vacuum Lifter grips the surface of the flat stone and has an easy-to-adjust frame, reducing the need to bend over and lift with the back instead of the knees. It also significantly reduces the possibility of common injuries such as cut, smashed and pinched fingers and is much more efficient than manual methods of moving heavy slabs.

Sheets of glass

Another common material that presents a challenge to lift is glass. Whether it’s double glazing for windows and doors, or aesthetic design additions, glass is bulky and sharp, plus it’s easily broken. The HSE states that “The handling of flat glass involves the risk of serious personal injury. HSE experience has shown that although the risk is higher in factories where flat glass is manufactured, serious accidents continue to happen in premises where glass is subsequently handled and processed.”

Handling, lifting or carrying glass poses the greatest risk of injury, so remove potential hazards with an electric specialised glass vacuum lifter that enables you to move sheets of glass that weigh up to 320kg safely and securely. For small movements and final positioning once the glass is in place, our Double Head Glass Suckers will prevent damage to the glass and the person moving it!

Concrete lintels

Concrete lintels are the heaviest and by far the most dangerous item to move on site, as their minimum weight is over 50kg. In the HSE's risk table, this is considered a very high risk no matter the number of people helping to lift them. Lintels also tend to be installed at height meaning that lifting equipment is a must. No matter what the stage of installation a Genie Material Lift with forks is the ultimate tool to take the pain out of handling lintels. Our engineers recommend the SLA-10, which has a safe working load of 454kg.

All lifting equipment is LOLER compliant and tested to their existing standards.

Our lifting services

- In addition to supplying you with the right lifting equipment for the job, we are able to service, repair and maintain your lifting equipment by utilising our suppliers LEEA qualified lifting engineers.
- They can:
- Inspect: 6 or 12 monthly inspection and certification of your equipment
- Test: Mechanical and beam testing
- Repair: repairs to your lifting equipment
- Load Testing
- On site equipment testing

So contact West Country Tool Hire today for ALL your lifting requirements

01672 700637 / 07704 186273

andy@westcountrytoolhire.co.uk

www.westcountrytoolhire.co.uk/categories