

## Tip 18 - Ditch the Tools

When I joined this Industry in 2007, I immediately felt (with no experience) that the HSE's Manual Handling Operations Regulations were dated and of very minimal practical use. Full of laws and regulations that really didn't help the Manual Handling Operative, say on the Factory Floor. I got introduced to the Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC) Tool. With my growing experience, I questioned 'Why isn't there a Tool for pushing and pulling?' And it took a further 9 years for the HSE to develop the Risk Assessment of Pushing and Pulling (RAPP) Tool. So 24 years after they published the Manual Handling Operations Regulations they publish a pushing and pulling tool. That's nearly a quarter of a century. I was an 11 year old boy when the Regulations were published and a 35 year old man when the RAPP tool was published. I mean come on?\* Let's investigate why you should *Ditch the Tools!*



When I say *Ditch the Tools*, I mean **stop using the MAC and RAPP Tools** when writing Manual Handling Risk Reduction Reports. I feel the HSE have over complicated the procedure of Manual Handling Risk Assessment with these 'Tools'. They have turned a simple subject into one that is not so simple. I think another way of describing it would be ... they've overcomplicated it. Don't you agree?

\*That's why I think, sorry know, the HSE don't take Manual Handling very seriously. Perhaps they should read *Sorry! We're Closed?*

## **The Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC) Tool**

The MAC Tool was released in 2003 to help the user identify high-risk workplace Manual Handling activities including lifting (and lowering), carrying and team lifting (carrying and lowering). The MAC Tool doesn't take into account tasks that involve pushing and pulling. The MAC Tool was well received by users as being easy and quick to use. Even the majority of non-inspectors (the general workforce) found it improved their ability to perform individual Manual Handling Risk Assessments and realise the relevant risk factors. The content of the MAC Tool is also contained within the HSE's Manual Handling Checklists, specifically the *Assessment Checklist for Lifting & Carrying: Section B*.

I have identified the following issues/ flaws with the MAC Tool:

### **LIFTING OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

#### **A). Load weight/ frequency**

Look at the graph. To the right side on the X-axis there is the category of 1 lift every 5 seconds (720 lifts per hour). Unless these are very light loads this is very unlikely in a factory setting. Frequencies of 1 lift every 9 seconds would be for example at the end of the finished product line in a food factory lifting the light weight boxes. As you go along the X-axis from right to left the handling frequencies are more realistic. The 2nd from the left frequency is 1 lift every 30 minutes (2 lifts per hour). The far left frequency is 1 lift per day. The graph is missing for example 1 lift every hour.

#### **C). Vertical lift region**

A more accurate colour banding and numerical scoring would be as follows:

- At elbow height should really be G0
- At knee to hip height & above elbow height should be A1
- Below knee & at head height or above should be R3

## **CARRYING OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

### **A). Load weight/ frequency**

Look at the graph. To the right side on the X-axis there is the category of 1 carry every 12 seconds (300 lifts per hour). Unless these are very light loads this is very unlikely in a factory setting. As you go along the X-axis from right to left the carrying frequencies are more realistic. The 2nd from the left frequency is 1 carry every 30 minutes (2 carries per hour). The far left frequency is 1 carry per day. The graph is missing for example 1 carry every hour.

### **B). Hand distance from lower back**

The R6 posture is not realistic. With a bulky, heavy load the body leans backwards, not forwards. One arm can be angled away from the torso in a position of shoulder Abduction. This is not shown as one of the options.

### **C). Asymmetrical torso or load**

The common male habit of carrying a load on the shoulder is not shown as one of the options. This would be R2.

There should be another R2 option involving 'Torso side bent and load is carried to one side'.

There should be another R2 option involving 'Carrying above the head with both arms'.

Email me at [gareth@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk](mailto:gareth@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk) if you feel there are any other issues/ flaws with the MAC Tool.

## **The Risk Assessment of Pushing & Pulling (RAPP) Tool**

The RAPP Tool was designed to help assess the key risks in manual pushing and pulling operations involving whole-body effort, e.g. moving loaded trolleys or roll cages, or dragging, hauling, sliding or rolling loads.

For me the RAPP Tool was a better attempt by the HSE compared to the MAC Tool. However remember the content of the RAPP Tool is also contained within the HSE's Manual Handling Checklists, specifically the *Assessment Checklist for Pushing & Pulling: Section B*. I have identified only one issue/ flaw with the RAPP Tool, but 'my oh my', it's a **BIG one!** It's so darn massive, that it completely tears the Tool apart. I want you to put your copy of *Sorry! We're Closed* down keeping this page open (maybe with your bookmark). Yes, stop reading and open up your RAPP Tool PDF.

If you don't have the RAPP Tool PDF saved on your computer you can download it from <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg478.htm>

In the space below I want you to write down what issue/ flaw you see.

Email me at [gareth@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk](mailto:gareth@osteopathicsolutions.co.uk) if you feel there are any other issues/ flaws with the RAPP Tool.

## **Ditch the Tools! Become a Manual Handling Expert**

When you are a Manual Handling Expert you don't need these Tools to conduct the most remarkable of Risk Reduction Reports. You can only become a Manual Handling Risk Management Expert with expertise in the following:

- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Human Biomechanics
- Hazardous Techniques & Practices
- Best Practice Techniques & Practices
- Manual Handling Equipment
- Mechanical & Automated Equipment

Once you have achieved Expert status, use the HSE's Manual Handling Checklists (although now the risk factors contained within will be innate to you). Your Risk Reduction Report is not there to sit in a draw and gather dust; you have written it to make meaningful and long term Manual Handling change (for the better) through convincing your Business' Directors to invest in Manual Handling Risk Management, and with that as you know, to *Target-Zero* Lost Time Accidents and Injury at Work Claims, leveraging Business growth.

Here is my 4-Step\* Plan for remarkable Manual Handling & Ergonomic Risk Assessments:

- Gather hardcore Intelligence
- Open your Eagle Eyes
- Ditch The Tools\*\*
- ***Don't*** Do a Branson, again!\*\*\*

One last thing. In our *CPD Group* Accredited Manual Handling Instructor Assessor Courses we do teach how to use the MAC and RAPP Tools. We find this is a good way for people who are new to Manual Handling Risk Assessment to understand the key risk factors. However the whole point of *Sorry! We're Closed* is to become a Manual Handling Risk Management Expert ..... and not continue forward as a novice. With that said, *Ditch The Tools!*

\*Osteopathic Solutions' Team of Manual Handling Risk Management Experts can do these 4 steps for you, your employees and your Business Owner. Check out [www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-risk-assessment](http://www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-risk-assessment)

\*\*The word 'tool' also has a slang meaning. A 'tool' is 'someone who lacks the mental capacity to know he or she is being used.' I referred to the Sociopathic Personality Disorder in the *Tips on Legal Sharks and Malingers*. I know this is deep, but are you a 'tool' to a pitiful human being who pains everybody that comes across their Antisocial Behaviour Disordered (wicked) personality? If so, please do one thing (for yourself), remove them from your life. **And fast!**

\*\*\*I mean shut your office door and put a DO NOT DISTURB sign on it.

## **RAPP Tool issue/ flaw**

This is with regards to **A-1 Type of equipment/Load weight (kg)**

**Medium, with three or more fixed wheels and/or castors:** *e.g. roll cages, Euro bins.*

- 500kg-750kg is HIGH R/4. This should be VERY HIGH R/8
- More than 750kg should therefore be UNACCEPTABLE P

**Large, steerable or running on rails:** *e.g. pallet truck or overhead rail system.*

From my extensive experience of teaching BackSafe pushing and pulling of palletised loads, even on a flat factory floor, 500kg is the cut off point for being able to maintain a reasonable spinal posture. After this you have to use bodyweight. At 1000kg, yes a tonne, you have to use every muscle and every bit of power your body has got. With that, ex-employee .... 'Welcome to the Maldives' and with that Business .... *Sorry! You're Closed.*

Here is what they should have written:

- Less than 250kg is LOW G/0
- 250kg-400kg is MEDIUM A/2
- 400kg-500kg is HIGH R/4
- 500kg-750kg is VERY HIGH R/8
- More than 750kg is UNACCEPTABLE P

The so-called Experts who put the RAPP Tool together clearly have never '*chucked bags*', have they? Maybe they should handle these load weights (my HIGH to UNACCEPTABLE) and see how they feel at the end of the day.

They have simply undercooked their assessment of load weights.

Well done, if you got it right. You are on that road to becoming a Manual Handling Risk Management Expert.

## Exercises

- Within your journey to become a Manual Handling Risk Management Expert *Do a Branson, again!* and attend our CPD Group Accredited 1 Day Manual Handling Risk Assessor Course. In this Course we teach how to use The Assessment of Repetitive Tasks (ART) Tool and The Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) Tool. Remember when I said *Ditch the Tools* I meant the MAC and RAPP Tools. The ART and REBA Tools actually offer something of value. Check out [www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-risk-assessor](http://www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-risk-assessor)
- To view Case Studies of our Team providing Manual Handling & Ergonomic Risk Assessments visit [www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-training-risk-ergonomic-assessment-case-studies](http://www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/manual-handling-training-risk-ergonomic-assessment-case-studies)

The range of Case Studies will be added to each year.