

Hazardous manual tasks safe work procedure (SWP)

Residential example: Manual handling of plasterboard (six metre sheets)

The SWP example below refers specifically to hazardous manual tasks and does not refer to other hazards that might be associated with handling plasterboard such as, traffic management, operating mobile plant or work at heights. The SWP you develop for hazardous manual task risk associated with handling plasterboard should be added to your existing procedures for managing other hazards.

The information provided is specifically for the task of *handling and fixing 49 kg x 6 m x 1.2 m x 10 mm plasterboard sheet to the ceiling.*

The SWP you develop will vary depending on the site in which work is being carried out. This document aims to cover most possible scenarios. As a Microsoft Word document it can be customised to suit site needs. The use of photos specific to the site and task in the safe work procedure may also be of benefit.

Hazards and risks?	Procedure (including control measures)	Guidance for developing the SWP
<p>Hazard Manually handling 6m x 1.2 m x 10mm (6.8 kg/m²) plasterboard sheet (49 kg) is a hazardous manual task</p> <p>Risk There is a risk of musculoskeletal injury (refer to risk management worksheet).</p>	<p>Before work starts <i>Note: As there is significant variation in residential design and size, consider the use of mechanical aids, smaller sheets or an alternative wall lining system, where practicable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order sheets to fit room size to reduce the amount of cutting and manual handling of 6 metre sheets. • Ensure the access ways are clear. • Go to the garage where the sheets are stored. • For this SWP the packs are stored in the garage, horizontally and the sheets are raised off the ground. • Confirm the dimensions and weight of the sheets before handling. • Identify the number of sheets required in each work area. <p>Start task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the pack. 	<p>Before work starts: <i>Both the builder and subcontractor should do a risk assessment and follow risk management principles.</i></p> <p><i>The builder's initial risk assessment should be done during the project planning stage. Actions the builder/PC should take before work starts include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify the hazardous manual tasks (HMT) for example fixing six metre plasterboard sheets to the ceiling</i> • <i>risk assess the HMT during the planning stage and prior to the procurement of the plastering services and material.</i> <p><i>In this example, the risk assessment identified that there is a risk of musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) when manually handling 6 metre sheets of plasterboard. Mechanical aids have therefore been included in the SWP to manage the risk of MSD.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The builder should require the use of mechanical aids during the tendering process.</i>

Hazards and risks?	Procedure (including control measures)	Guidance for developing the SWP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use two workers for a team lift to pick up the sheet. Where practicable, use three workers for the team lift. • Pick sheet up from pack and manually carry the sheet to the work area. • Place the sheet on the stack in the designated storage area, which is as close as is reasonably practicable to where the sheets are to be used. • The sheets are stored horizontally and raised off the ground using gluts (refer to SWP for storage using gluts). • Get the next sheet and carry to the work area. <p>Note: For all team handling referred to in this SWP follow the team handling instructions below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever team handling is used it is essential to match workers, coordinate and carefully plan the lift. You should ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of workers in the team is in proportion to the weight of the load and the difficulty of the lift • one person is appointed to plan and take charge of the operation • enough space is available for the handlers to manoeuvre as a group • team members are of similar height and capability, where possible • team members know their responsibilities during the lift • training in team lifting has been provided and the 	<p><i>Note: All mechanical aids should comply with proven engineering principles, relevant standards and be properly maintained to ensure they are without risks to the health and safety of any person so far as is reasonably practicable.</i></p> <p><i>The subcontractor should do a risk assessment once the materials specifications and location of where work is to be done are known.</i></p> <p><i>The subcontractor will then consult with the builder/PC about the risk assessment. In this example, the risk assessment included consultation with workers and may have drawn on knowledge from previous similar projects and the current project.</i></p> <p><i>In this example, a number of the sources of risk are outside the scope of the subcontractor to manage, for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the internal access is restricted, thus limiting the use of mechanical aids or trolleys</i> • <i>the standard sheet lifters on the market are not designed for six metre sheets. Subcontractors are therefore unable to use these when handling six metre sheets.</i> <p><i>Administrative controls including team lifting are therefore implemented by the contractor.</i></p> <p><i>Note: For fixing sheets other than six metre (e.g. 4.8 metre and shorter), a sheet lifter should be used so far as reasonably practicable. Refer to the Commercial safe work procedure for handling plasterboard (page 6) for procedures using a manual sheet lifter.</i></p>

Hazards and risks?	Procedure (including control measures)	Guidance for developing the SWP
	<p>lift rehearsed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the team communicate throughout the procedure. <p>Ceiling fixing</p> <p>It is not practicable to use a sheet lifter as there are no sheet lifters available to handle six metre sheets. The sheet will be fixed manually to the ceiling, using three workers for a team lift.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the access ways are clear. Set up work platform. Three workers pick up sheet from the stack, with two workers at each end of the sheet and one worker in the middle. Carry sheet to work area. Rest the sheet against the work platform. Three workers access the work platform (refer to SWP for use of work platforms and SWMS for work at heights). Three workers lift sheet up to the ceiling, with two workers at each end of the sheet and one worker in the middle. Use a ceiling prop to support the sheet and reduce the amount of overhead work while one worker remains on the work platform and uses a screw gun (refer to SWP for use of screw gun) to fix the sheet to fit sheets to ceiling. Rotate the task of using the screw gun between the three workers with each new sheet being fixed. 	<p><i>The builder should consult with relevant others and implement further controls to manage the risk, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ensuring work areas provide sufficient space to allow for the use of assistive devices and/or mechanical aids</i> <i>keeping internal access ways are clear</i> <i>checking the work surface allows for use of mechanical aids or assistive devices, for example a sheet trolley</i> <i>ensuring loads are able to be stored and handled as close to point of use as practicable</i> <i>planning work flow to ensure there is no site congestion of materials or trades.</i> <p><i>The builder should also consider the use other controls, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>smaller, easier to handle sheets/ alternative material</i> <i>ways to ensure that a mechanical aid can be used for handling the six metre sheets.</i> <p>Labelling packs and single sheets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Suppliers provide easily accessed information about the size, weight and the safe handling of the packs and single sheets.</i> <p>Storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If sheets are stored horizontally, consider if they can they be raised off the ground to reduce manual handling from ground level and allow for increased use of mechanical aids, for example with the use of glut or dunnages.</i> <p>Team lifting (where more than one worker is involved in the handling procedure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Team lifting should not be considered an adequate long term</i>

Hazards and risks?	Procedure (including control measures)	Guidance for developing the SWP
	<p><i>Note: Team lifting should not be considered an adequate long-term control. Team lifting has inherent risks and alternative solutions are currently being considered through consultation with the builder, subcontractor and workers.</i></p>	<p><i>control. Team lifting has inherent risks and alternative solutions should be considered through consultation with the builder and subcontractor and workers.</i></p> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Workers must have specific training for the handling of plasterboard sheets was provided including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>manual task risk management, including the characteristics of hazardous manual tasks</i> ○ <i>specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them</i> ○ <i>how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures</i> ○ <i>how to report a problem or maintenance issues.</i>
Name of Worker(s)		Worker signature(s)
Date SWP received by workers:		
Date Information, training and instruction given to workers:		

Disclaimer: The material presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government as an information source only. The State of Queensland makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and the reader should not rely on it. The Queensland Government disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including, without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason.