

Australian Capital Territory

Occupational Health and Safety (National Standard for Manual Tasks) Code of Practice 2008

Disallowable instrument DI2008–31

made under the

Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989, section 206 (Codes of Practice)

Explanatory Statement

Section 206(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989* provides that the Minister may approve a code of practice to provide practical guidance about the Act. Section 206(2) provides that before approving a proposed code of practice, the Minister must refer the proposed code to the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council (the Council) for its consideration, and take into account any relevant recommendation made by the Council. At its 88th meeting on 23 November 2007, the Council approved the National Standard for Manual Tasks (ASCC 2007) as a Code of Practice (the Code).

The Code provides guidance to prevent injury and illness to persons engaged in manual tasks at work. Managing the risk for manual tasks requires systematically identifying and controlling those risk factors that lead to musculoskeletal disorders. The risk management process will help those whose responsibility it is to identify hazardous manual tasks and to understand the nature and the source of the risk so that they can make informed decisions about what to do to eliminate or control the risks.

The stages in the risk management process include-

- identifying hazardous manual tasks by screening tasks to recognise those that have the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders;
- assessing the risks of musculoskeletal disorders that arise from these hazardous manual tasks and identifying the sources of the risk;
- eliminating tasks or parts of tasks that have the potential to cause musculoskeletal disorders, or, if this is not reasonably practicable, implementing measures to alter the sources of risk in a way that minimises the risk of musculoskeletal disorders as far as is reasonably practicable; and

- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the measures implemented as well as keeping records of the action taken to manage the risk.

The Code outlines a recommended approach for assisting employers to manage risk in their workplace. Designers, manufacturers and suppliers can use this information to learn about how musculoskeletal disorders occur, sources of risk, and control options. Appendix 4 to the Code provides reference to other resources that may assist in managing risks at the design, manufacture and supply stages.

An employer, an owner of premises used as a workplace, a designer, manufacturer or supplier of places of work or items for use in a workplace, or a health and safety representative, OHS professional, a worker or anyone else interested in reducing the incidence and severity of musculoskeletal injuries that may arise as a result of manual tasks at work will implement the recommended procedures for managing risks arising from performing manual tasks at work.

The objects of the Code are to assist in reducing the number and severity of injuries to workers performing manual tasks, and to reduce injury costs.

Following the Code could produce benefits that include-

- improved business performance, efficiency and productivity;
- fewer workers' compensation claims, which may lead to lower premiums;
- faster and easier return to work for workers who do sustain an injury;
- fewer absences from work, and less disruption;
- retention of skilled workers; and
- a safe workplace with a positive safety culture.

This instrument takes effect the day after it is notified on the ACT Legislation Register.

An approval under section 206(1) is a disallowable instrument.