

Hazard Fact Sheet – Manual Handling (Hazardous Manual Tasks)

What is the Hazard?
Manual handling involves lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or holding objects. On solar farms, this often includes panels, tubing, racking components, or cables that vary in size and weight (up to 130 kg).

Types of Injuries / Health Effects

- Back, shoulder, and neck strains
- Sprains and muscle tears
- Long-term repetitive strain injuries
- Cuts or bruises from awkward handling

Causes / Scenarios

- Lifting panels or tubes without mechanical aid or help
- Working in awkward positions (e.g. bending, twisting, reaching)
- Repetitive actions during racking or cable pulling
- Fatigue from heat, long shifts, or dehydration
- Poor housekeeping causing slips or awkward footing

Control Measures

- Use mechanical aids (telehandlers, trolleys, lifting frames) whenever possible.
- Plan each lift, check weight, path, and footing before moving the load.
- Keep an eye out for mud, ruts, cables, off-cuts and open trenches, and take a moment to move trip hazards or ask for housekeeping support before carrying a load through.
- Wear gloves that give you grip without being too bulky and choose footwear with good ankle support and tread to help on uneven or sloping ground.
- Use team lifts for heavy or awkward items.
- If you have been doing the same lifting or pulling task for a while, ask to rotate tasks where possible and use short stretches or micro-breaks to reduce strain. Stay hydrated and rest when fatigued.
- If you feel sharp pain, pulling, or ongoing soreness in your back, shoulders, neck or hands, stop the task, report it, and seek first aid or medical advice rather than pushing on.

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-hazardous-manual-tasks



Safe Work Australia – Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice



Case Example:

Shoulder Strain During Panelling:
A contractor reported a sore left shoulder after repetitive panelling activities. The discomfort was attributed to repeated lifting and possibly poor technique.

Key Lessons Learned:

- Repetitive manual tasks can lead to cumulative strain injuries.
- Early reporting and intervention can prevent more serious injuries.