KORU CARE AUSTRALIA
DISABILITY & AGED CARE SUPPORT

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Manual Handling Policy and Procedure

Koru Care Australia

A concise policy and procedure for identifying, assessing and controlling manual handling risks in home, community, transport and office-based support work.

Document governance	Details
Document owner	Operations Manager / Director
Applies to	Employees, contractors, volunteers, students, agency staff and any person undertaking work for Koru Care Australia.
Service context	NDIS, aged care, brokered, private and community support services, including personal care, domestic assistance, social support, transport, yard work and administration.
Document code	KCA-POL-MH-001
Version / status	Version 1.0 - Approved
Effective / review date	Effective 03/07/2026. Review by 03/07/2027, or earlier if legislation, guidance, incidents, client needs, equipment or work practices change.

Worker quick guide	Required action
Stop	Stop the task if it feels heavy, awkward, rushed, repetitive, unsafe or causes discomfort. Do not attempt to manually lift a person from the floor.
Assess	Check the task, the person, the load, the environment, available equipment, time pressure, fatigue, client behaviour and whether you have been trained.
Control	Use safer methods such as task redesign, reducing the load, using equipment, asking for assistance, changing the roster, or seeking updated care instructions.
Report	Report hazards, pain, near misses, equipment faults, changed client mobility, unsafe homes, falls, aggressive behaviour or any task you cannot safely complete.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Koru Care will manage manual handling risks to protect workers, clients, families, visitors and members of the public. The aim is to eliminate hazardous manual handling where reasonably practicable, and where this is not possible, to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Koru Care work activities, including client homes, vehicles, community settings, offices, storage areas and any other location where Koru Care work is performed. It covers manual handling of people, animals, equipment, groceries, laundry, cleaning items, bins, mobility aids, furniture, files, supplies and other objects.

3. Policy statement

Koru Care will provide and maintain safe systems of work, consult with workers, provide suitable information, instruction, training and supervision, and review manual handling controls. Workers must follow safe work procedures, use equipment correctly, work within their training and competency, and report hazards or incidents promptly.

Client choice, dignity of risk and independence are important. These do not require a worker to perform an unsafe lift, transfer, cleaning task or load handling task. Where a preferred task cannot be completed safely, Koru Care will seek a safer alternative that respects the client while protecting worker safety.

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4. Key definitions

Term	Meaning for Koru Care
Manual handling	Any task requiring a person to use the body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, move, hold, restrain, support, clean, reach, bend, twist, grip or otherwise handle a person, object or animal.
Hazardous manual handling	Manual handling involving high or sudden force, repetitive or sustained force, awkward or sustained posture, repetitive movement, vibration, live persons or animals, unstable loads, hard-to-grasp loads, or work that causes discomfort or injury risk.
Reasonably practicable	What can reasonably be done after considering the likelihood of risk, likely harm, what is known about the risk and controls, availability and suitability of controls, and the cost of controls.
No lift / low lift approach	People must not be manually lifted except in an emergency where no safer option is available. Transfers are to be managed using safe systems, equipment, training and support plans.

5. Manual handling risk management process

Koru Care will use the following process before starting new supports, when work changes, when a worker reports concern, after an incident or near miss, and during periodic review.

Step	Koru Care requirement
1. Identify	Identify manual handling tasks and hazards through intake, care planning, home safety checks, staff consultation, worker feedback, incident reports, client changes and review of shift notes.
2. Assess	Assess the task, individual worker capability, client mobility and behaviour, load, environment, equipment, frequency, duration, time pressure, fatigue, travel and whether the worker is trained.
3. Control	Use the hierarchy of control. Eliminate the task where possible. If not possible, redesign the task, use equipment, reduce load size, change environment, provide assistance, alter rosters, set task limits and provide training.
4. Communicate	Record controls in the client profile, shift notes, care plan, risk assessment, roster instruction or worker file as appropriate. Workers must have access to the current instruction before the shift.
5. Review	Review controls after incidents, pain or discomfort reports, changed client needs, changed worker capacity, equipment changes, HSR or worker request, new information, or at least annually for higher risk tasks.

6. Common Koru Care manual handling risks

Work area	Examples of risk tasks	Expected controls
Personal care	Assisting showering, drying, dressing lower body, applying creams, mobility support, bed or chair transfers, falls response.	Use care plan instructions, mobility aids, shower chairs, slide sheets or hoists where prescribed. Do not lift a fallen client. Escalate if mobility changes.
Domestic assistance	Vacuuming, mopping, shower or bath cleaning, low dusting, bins, laundry baskets, making beds, carrying cleaning supplies.	Limit bending and squatting, use long-handled tools, rotate tasks, avoid overreaching, split loads, set task limits and report unsafe bathroom or floor-level work.
Shopping and transport	Carrying groceries, loading wheelchairs or walkers, assisting in and out of vehicles, driving fatigue, uneven public areas.	Use trolleys, split bags, park safely, avoid rushed transfers, maintain clear communication, use client mobility aids and request assistance for heavy equipment.
Yard and community work	Green waste, uneven ground, heat, tools, lifting bags, pushing bins, moving outdoor items.	Use suitable tools, reduce load size, avoid high force tasks, apply heat controls and do not move heavy furniture or unsafe items unless assessed and approved.
Office and records	Prolonged sitting, awkward workstation setup, carrying files or supplies, laptop use.	Set up ergonomic workstations, take movement breaks, use trolleys or split loads, and request assessment if discomfort occurs.

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7. Safe work rules for workers

- Do not complete a manual handling task that is unsafe, beyond your training, beyond your physical capacity, outside the care plan, or not reasonably controlled.
- Do not manually lift a client from the floor. Reassure the client, make the area safe, follow the falls response procedure and call emergency services or clinical support when required.
- Do not operate hoists, transfer aids, wheelchairs, adjustable beds or other equipment unless trained and authorised, and only in line with the care plan and manufacturer instructions.
- Do not move heavy furniture, appliances, mattresses or large items unless the task has been risk assessed and approved.
- Report immediately if the client is more unsteady than usual, has had a fall, refuses equipment needed for safety, the home layout is unsafe, equipment is faulty, or you feel pain or discomfort.
- Use approved communication channels. Update shift notes factually where required and escalate urgent risks by phone to management.

8. Controls, equipment and work design

Controls must be practical for home and community settings and should be chosen in consultation with the worker and, where relevant, the client, family, coordinator or allied health professional.

Control type	Examples
Eliminate	Do not provide a task where it cannot be made safe. Remove unnecessary handling. Arrange delivery, alternate support, or external specialist service for heavy or high-risk tasks.
Substitute or redesign	Split loads, change task order, reduce frequency or duration, use lighter items, use long-handled cleaning tools, move frequently used items to waist height.
Engineering / equipment	Trolleys, shower chairs, grab rails, wheelchairs, walkers, slide sheets, hoists, adjustable beds, transfer belts only where appropriate and trained.
Administrative	Care plan instructions, two-worker supports, roster limits, task rotation, induction, competency checks, incident reporting, home safety review, fatigue management.
PPE	Gloves, suitable footwear and other PPE as required. PPE is the lowest control and must not be relied on as the main control for hazardous manual handling.

9. Training, competency and consultation

Koru Care will provide manual handling information, instruction, training and supervision suitable to the role and service type. Training may include safe body positioning, risk assessment before and during tasks, equipment use, falls response, domestic assistance risk controls, client transfers, infection control interface, incident reporting and when to stop work.

Workers must be consulted about manual handling risks and proposed controls. Health and Safety Representatives, where elected, must be involved as required. Training alone is not sufficient where the task can be made safer through work design, equipment, rostering, environmental changes or other higher-level controls.

10. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Director / Operations Manager	Maintain this policy, ensure safe systems of work, provide resources, respond to escalated risks, approve high-risk controls and monitor compliance.
Rostering / supervisors	Match workers to tasks within training and capacity, include clear shift instructions, arrange two-person supports where required and respond to worker concerns before the next shift where practical.
Workers	Follow this policy and care instructions, complete training, use equipment safely, stop unsafe work, report hazards, incidents, near misses, pain, changed client needs and equipment faults.
Clients and representatives	Work with Koru Care to identify safe ways to deliver support, maintain access to required equipment, and advise of changes in mobility, health, home layout or risks.

11. Incident reporting, review and records

All manual handling injuries, pain or discomfort, near misses, falls response concerns, equipment faults, unsafe homes and refused safety equipment must be reported as soon as practicable. Management will review the incident, determine immediate controls, update relevant documents and consider whether external advice is required.

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Koru Care will keep relevant records such as risk assessments, client support instructions, training and competency records, incident reports, equipment checks, consultation records and review outcomes.

12. Linked documents and references

Internal documents	Workplace Health and Safety Policy, Risk Management Policy, Incident Management Procedure, Client Risk Assessment, Home Safety Checklist, Staff Training Matrix, Vehicle Safety Checklist, Infection Control Policy, Social Media and Digital Communications Policy, New Staff Member Declaration.
External references	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic); Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic); Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025 (Vic); WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code: Hazardous Manual Handling; WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code: Psychological Health; NDIS Practice Standards; NDIS Code of Conduct; Aged Care Quality Standards and Aged Care Code of Conduct.