

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Smash repair industry (including spray painters) – Manual tasks

Manual tasks can cause injury if it involves:

- high force (e.g. lifting off a car bonnet)
- bad postures (e.g. leaning and stretching over a car bonnet)
- static postures (e.g. sitting/standing/bending in one position for long periods)
- performing a movement repeatedly (e.g. continuous sanding by hand).

To decrease the likelihood of injuries from manual tasks, wherever possible, the harmful task should be eliminated completely. This is not always possible though, so changes need to be made to the task to reduce the risk of injury.

Where a high force is involved:

- use suitable mechanical aids for moving heavy items/bending panels and frames (e.g. trolleys, caster systems, hoists, porta power)
- maintain mechanical aids to ensure they work properly
- use pumps or taps on drums of thinners so only the required amount needs to be lifted
- team lifting should only be used where all people involved have been trained in team lifting techniques.

Where bad postures are involved:

- store heavier items on middle racks (at waist level) and lighter items on high and low racks

- adjust the height of what is being worked on, or raise or lower platforms the person is on to minimise bending and reaching
- provide a mechanics creeper to make low work easier.

Where static postures are involved:

- provide height adjustable stools that allow people to change their posture when necessary
- install a horizontal bar at the bottom of workbenches for foot support
- install anti-fatigue matting on hard floor surfaces where possible (ensure they don't create a tripping hazard)
- encourage workers to take short breaks and organise work so that people have to occasionally get up and move.

Where repetitive movements are involved:

- use machines to reduce the need for people to do repetitive tasks (e.g. electric/air sanding tools)
- allow breaks from repetitive tasks by having workers do other tasks so other body parts are used.

For all manual handling tasks, train workers in all the tasks they do to ensure they are doing them in the safest and most efficient way.

For more information on manual tasks and general workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit www.deir.qld.gov.au

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