

# Lifting and lowering screening tool

# What can this tool help with?

This screening tool can help you identify when a lifting or lowering task is low risk or if you need to complete a more detailed risk assessment.

# How do you use this screening tool?

### **STEP 1** CONSIDER IF YOU HAVE ANY VULNERABLE WORKERS

Some vulnerable workers may be at greater risk of injury. Go straight to the New Zealand Manual Handling Assessment Charts (NZMAC) and/or complete additional investigation of the contributing risk factors if you have workers who:

- are new mothers, or pregnant
- are young workers
- are older workers
- are new to the job or workforce
- have a disability, significant health condition, injury, or are recovering from an injury.

## **STEP 2** USING THE LIFTING SCREENING TOOL (FLOWCHART 1)

- 1. Watch workers carrying out the lifting or lowering activity.
- 2. Use Figure 1 as a guide to check which zone or zones the workers' hands pass through when lifting or lowering the load.
- 3. Look at the range of weights that are being lifted/lowered for the task that you are assessing, and select the maximum weight handled.
- Use the maximum weight and compare it to the loads, also called screening values, in the different lifting/lowering zones when the worker is in a stable body position. A stable body position is one where the feet are on the ground and provide a good base of support to perform the lift.
- 5. Once you have the screening value, answer the questions in Flowchart 1 to see what, if any, action you need to take.



#### Remember

The screening values are **not** 'safe load limits' or acceptable 'weight limits'. If handling occurs above the screening values, it simply means that you should complete a more detailed risk assessment to understand the risk factors in greater detail.

When handling these loads (or less) in these zones, the risk of injury is low for most people and no further action should be needed.



FIGURE 1: Screening values for lifting and lowering tasks for males and females

If you need some help to use Figure 1, look at the <u>examples</u> provided after the flowchart.



exceeded or loads are handled outside the lifting zones complete the 'lifting' assessment in the NZMAC.

10kg

3kg 7kg

5kg

# Some examples to help you use the screening tool

Look at the following examples to help you understand how to use the tool in different situations.



#### Example 2: The load weight reduces as it is held away from the body with arms outstretched or, at high or low levels



This is because there is a greater risk of developing discomfort, pain, or injury when lifting or lowering in these postures.

You have a female worker who is lifting and lowering loads at around knee height with their arms outstretched away from their body.

The screening value for this task is 7kg.

Using the tool, you see that most females should be OK to lift/ lower 7kg or less.

But if your female workers are lifting loads greater than 7kg in this posture they may be at increased risk of injury, so you should complete a more detailed risk assessment.

#### Example 3: The load is being moved through different zones



You have a female worker who lifts a load off a workbench where the load is held close to their body. The screening value in this zone is 16kg.

But they lower the load onto the ground with their arms outstretched away from their body. The screening value in this zone is 3kg.

The lifting screening value is 16kg but is only 3kg for the lowering task. You need to select the lowest screening value (3kg).

Using the tool, you see that most females should be OK when lifting/lowering a 3kg or less load to ground level with the arms held away from the body.

If your female workers are lifting loads greater than 3kg in this posture they may be at increased risk of injury, so you should complete a more detailed risk assessment.





