

New training to keep more workers safe from injury

HealthShare NSW's Food and Hotel, Linen and Distribution staff are participating in a new Manual Handling training program being rolled out across the organisation.

Part of a wider push by Work Health and Safety (WHS) and Workforce Development to make our work environments as safe as possible, the training takes two hours and includes theory, practical and competency-based assessment. Previously fairly generic and theoretical, this new training has been customised to focus on the specific tasks required of each of our key services.

Mandatory for all frontline operational staff and their supervisors, the program will initially be delivered over the coming months by an external training provider, Ethos Health, to "priority" sites which have been identified in consultation with managers and through a review of injuries, workers compensation claims and reported high-risk hazards.

"WorkCover statistics show that out of every 1,000 employees, on average 13 will get a serious work-related injury or illness in Australia," said Fay Redmond, Manager, Workforce Development. "These training sessions aim to remind us of the importance of safe work practices and teach our staff how to stay safe."

Once the program has finished at the priority sites, a review of its outcomes will be conducted before continuing to roll out the training across the rest of HealthShare NSW.



What is a hazardous manual task?

A hazardous manual task, as defined in the WHS Regulations, is a task requiring a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving one or more of the following:

- **Repetitive or sustained force** – for example, pushing trolleys full of linen or working on a plating line in a kitchen;
- **High or sudden force** – such as security staff requiring to physically restrain individuals or suddenly needing to stop a full linen trolley as someone walks in front of it;
- **Repetitive movement** – for example, lifting linen bags in soiled sorting or collecting linen bags on a ward in a hospital;
- **Sustained or awkward posture** – such as constant standing at ironer machines or cleaning in hospital rooms accessing underneath beds and equipment;
- **Exposure to vibration** – for example, maintenance staff working with hand-held power tools for long periods.

Dr Anne Mok, Medical Director, WHS, said: "The very important patient support services provided by our Food and Hotel, Linen and Distribution staff are predominantly manual tasks and can put staff at risk of injuring themselves in the process of looking after our patients. Manual handling training teaches our staff how to undertake their tasks to minimise the risk of injury to themselves and their team members."

Anne said she hopes there will be a greater awareness among frontline staff of the potential risks of injury and, through an increased knowledge

of how to do the tasks safely, fewer on-the-job injuries.

"We value our staff as highly as their families do, and want them to have a happy and productive life outside of work as well," she said.