# 13.0 SPECIFIC HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE AND FACTORS TO CONSIDER

## 13.1 Manual Handling

The Company has a duty to manage manual handling hazards systematically. Guidance for this process is contained in the WorkSafe ‘Code of Practice for Manual Handling’.

Some factors to be considered are:

* The use of mechanical aids as part of a no-lift policy or clear instructions of correct lifting procedures
* The layout of the workplace
* The location of objects in well-lit areas without slipping or tripping hazards
* Systems of work
* Human factors, fitness for task
* Workloads and speeds
* Ergonomics
* Training and education

Common causes of manual handling injuries include:

* Sprains and strains
* Back injuries or pain
* Foot injuries
* Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)

## 13.2 Environmental Hazards

Environmental hazards include elements contained within the environment that can cause harm where work is being undertaken, such as fumes, dust, noise, vibration, temperature and poor visual conditions.

Some factors to be considered are:

* Elements that might arise as a result of the work being conducted (eg. fumes, dust, noise and vibration)
* Inadequate ventilation
* Hazardous thermal conditions (hot in summer, cold in winter)
* Isolation or dampening of vibrating mechanical parts
* Training and education
* Hydration and nutrition
* Workplace stress and fatigue
* Shift work
* Appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment
* The level of exertion (eg. the speed at which work is performed)

## 13.3 Noise

Noise is an issue for the collision repair industry. Guidelines for managing hazards related to noise are found in the WorkSafe ‘Approved Code of Practice for the Management of Noise in the Workplace’.

Some factors to be considered are:

* Regularly monitoring workplace noise levels, particularly with changes in processes or plant and machinery
* Engineering controls
* Isolating the noise from employees
* Providing hearing protection
* Training and education
* Baseline and regular health monitoring with employee consent

## 13.4 Electrical Hazards

Employers must ensure there is systematic management of electrical hazards.

Some factors to be considered are:

* Plant is not to be used if the plant, or the conditions under which it is to be used, gives rise to a hazard of electrical shock due to the presence of electricity
* There is a nearby electrical hazard

Compliance with the relevant legislation and New Zealand Standards. AS / NZS 3760 specifies the safety inspection testing and tagging protocols for electrical leads (includes portable equipment). Test and tag is the recognised control for managing electrical equipment in workshops.

## 13.5 Fatigue

Examples of symptoms of fatigue are increased error rates, lapses in concentration, increased reaction times, and lack of physical or mental strength. Fatigue can occur as a result of any of the following factors (individually, or in combination):

* Workload factors including:
  + - High physical workload – long periods standing, walking, carrying
    - High mental workload – long periods concentrating, computer work
    - Low mental workload, or boredom
    - Environmental conditions that increase the demands of work, such as adverse weather conditions or demanding terrain
  + Organisational factors such as:
    - Work schedules that do not provide sufficient time for sleep or rest
    - Long hours of work
    - Hours of work that require employees to work or commute during normal sleeping hours
    - Unpredictable hours of work
    - Extended hours of work.

This can be made worse by being offered incentive bonuses that encourage employees to work when fatigued.

* Individual factors such as:
  + General health
  + Age
  + Gender
  + Nutrition
  + Hydration
  + Duration and quality of sleep
  + Circadian rhythm (the 24-hour biological clock)
* Psychological factors such as:
* Attitude to work
* Motivation
* The use of stimulants to cope with fatigue
* Life away from work factors such as:
  + Family commitments
  + Social commitments
  + Socio-economic factors
  + Commuting
  + Other work
  + Study

Employers need to assess the health and safety hazards of fatigue and implement appropriate controls. Controls can include:

* Modifying the work design, such as the physical and mental work demands, the work intensity and rest breaks
* Modifying organisational factors such as work schedules and incentive bonuses
* Modifying environmental factors that contribute to fatigue, such as ensuring a comfortable thermal work environment
* Introducing administrative controls, such as developing work practices to reduce fatigue in the workplace

## 13.6 Hazardous Substances (including Dangerous Goods)

It’s easy to think that it won’t happen to you. But the truth is that **500-800 New Zealanders die** from work-related illnesses every year. Many of these deaths are thought to be related to exposure to hazardous substances at work.

Where employees are likely to be exposed to hazardous substances (eg. chemicals, paints etc.) in the workplace, employers need to consult and comply with information on the safe handling of each substance, such as material safety data sheets (MSDS) and any instructions on packaging. The employer shall provide appropriate equipment, information and training for application of chemicals used on-site.

Controls for hazardous substances can include:

* Induction and training of employees to identify and manage hazardous substances
* Segregated storage facilities
* MSDS location is easily accessible
* Emergency response procedures, including spill management
* Issuing of personal protective equipment

The collision repair industry uses a number of hazardous substances on a daily basis. Generally, a collision repair workshop will have a flammable liquids store where these are stored, a paint mixing room and a spray booth.

***Action:*** *The Responsible Person will need to know the requirements under HSNO.*

1. Know what hazardous substances you have and understand the harm they can cause

2. Eliminate, isolate and minimise

3. Be fire safe

4. Be ready for a spill

5. Separate incompatible hazardous substances

6. Have signs

7. Test certificates

8. Emergency response plan

For further information refer to ‘Working Safely with Hazardous Substances’ which can be found on the H&S website under ‘Guidance Documents’.

## 13.7 Codes of Practice, Safety Data Sheets, Legislation and Regulations

Where the Company requires information from relevant legislation, regulations, or codes of practice, this is available through WorkSafe.

Material Safety Data Sheets and Safety Data Sheets are available from the manufacturer or supplier.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each hazardous substance must be available on site or be available electronically for immediate reference.

A MSD Register (summarises the hazardous substances onsite) should be maintained and updated regularly.  This is also known as a ‘Hazardous Substance Inventory form’.

## 13.8 Working at Height

We recognise that staff who work at height on vehicles may be vulnerable to falling. We understand that particular care is required to provide safe systems of work for employees who are required to work at height on vehicles, and a risk assessment may be required for particular jobs eg. truck or van roofs, in order to ensure that adequate precautions are taken.

We will :

* Undertake a preliminary assessment to determine the likely risks of working at height
* Provide a safe system of work for staff
* Undertake detailed specific risk assessment where conditions require unusual precautions
* Implement appropriate controls as identified eg. trestles and planks to minimise risks of falling from a height
* Provide appropriate information and training to all staff who may be required to work at height