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Ordinance on Health and Safety Requirements for the Manual Handling of Loads at Work

(Lastenhandhabungsverordnung, LasthandhabV)

Manual Handling of Loads Ordinance of 4 December 1996 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1841, 1842), as last amended by Article 294 of the Ordinance of 19 June 2020 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1328)

This Ordinance, in conjunction with the Safety and Health at Work Act, serves to implement Council Directive 90/269/EEC of 29 May 1990 on the minimum health and safety requirements for the manual handling of loads where there is a risk particularly of back injury to workers (OJ L 156, p. 9).

The Ordinance was issued by the Federal Government with the consent of the Bundesrat as Article 2 of the Ordinance of 4 December 1996 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1841). Pursuant to Article 5 of that Ordinance it entered into force on 20 December 1996.

Section 1 Scope

(1) This Ordinance applies to the manual handling of loads which, by reason of their characteristics or of unfavourable ergonomic conditions, present a risk to the health and safety of workers, particularly to the lumbar spine.

(2) For the purposes of this Ordinance, 'manual handling' shall be any transporting or supporting of a load by human effort, including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving of a load.

(3) The Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, the Federal Ministry of Defence or the Federal Ministry of Finance may, insofar as they are competent in a respective case, with the agreement of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and, insofar as the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community itself is not competent, with the agreement of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community determine that for specific activities in the federal public service, in particular in the Federal Armed Forces, the police, the civil protection and disaster management services, the customs or the intelligence services, the provisions set down in this Ordinance shall not apply in full or in part insofar as there is a compelling public interest, particularly in regard to the maintenance or restoration of public security. In such cases it shall at the same time be determined how the health and the safety of workers in accordance with this Ordinance are to be guaranteed by other means.

Section 2 Measures

(1) The employer shall, having regard to the Annex, take appropriate organizational measures or shall use appropriate means, in particular mechanical equipment, in order toService provided by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection avoid the need for the manual handling of loads where there is a risk to the health and safety of workers, particularly to the lumbar spine.

(2) Where the manual handling of loads cannot be avoided, the employer shall assess the conditions of work having particular regard to the Annex when assessing the conditions of work in accordance with section 5 of the Safety and Health at Work Act. On the basis of this assessment the employer shall take the appropriate measures in order to reduce the risk to the health and safety of the workers as far as possible.

Section 3 Delegation of tasks

When delegating tasks involving the manual handling of loads where there is a risk to the health and safety of workers, the employer shall take account of the physical capability of the workers to perform those tasks.

Section 4 Instruction

When instructing workers in accordance with section 12 of the Safety and Health at Work Act the employer shall in particular give consideration to the Annex and the physical capabilities of the workers. He shall, insofar as possible, give workers precise instructions on the proper manual handling of loads and the risks to which workers are exposed, in particular when performing the task incorrectly.

Annex

The following characteristics may present a risk to the health and safety of workers, particularly to the lumbar spine:

- (1) With regard to the load to be handled, in particular
 1. its weight, shape and size,
 2. where it is to be grasped,
 3. its centre of gravity, and
 4. the possibility of unpredictable movement.
- (2) With regard to the task to be performed by the workers, in particular
 1. the required posture or movement, in particular a twisting movement,
 2. the distance between the trunk and the load,
 3. the distance to be covered by lifting, lowering or carrying the load,
 4. the extent, the frequency and the duration of the required effort,
 5. the required personal protective equipment,
 6. the work rate resulting from a process on which workers have no influence, and
 7. available rest or recovery periods.
- (3) With regard to the place of work and the working environment, in particular
 1. the available vertical space,
 2. the difference in height between various levels,
 3. the temperature, humidity and air movement,
 4. the lighting conditions,
 5. the evenness, slip-resistance or stability of the floor, and
 6. clothing, in particular footwear.