

A safer way to lift and lower objects

Tasks that involve lifting and lowering objects can pose risks to people's health and safety at work – including sprains and strains of the back and shoulders.

Discuss tasks that involve lifting and lowering at work and whether they are being done as safely as they can be.

A safer way to lift and lower

Eliminating the need to lift and lower objects is always the best solution.

Where this is not possible, the workplace and task should be designed so that lifting and lowering occurs in the **GREEN ZONE** – between shoulder and mid-thigh and close to the body.

The **GREEN ZONE** is the *best working zone*.

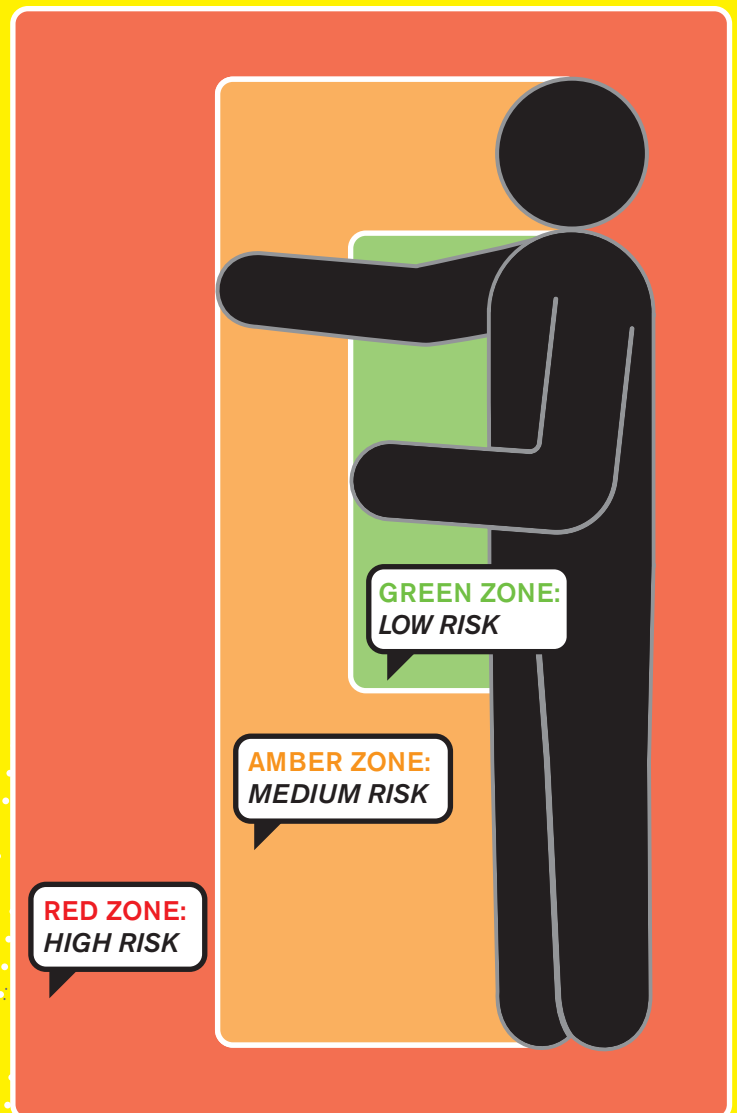
Lifting and lowering should be performed in front of the body, involve minimal twisting and allow for a good grip on the object being handled.



Tasks involving lifting and lowering can be hazardous when they:

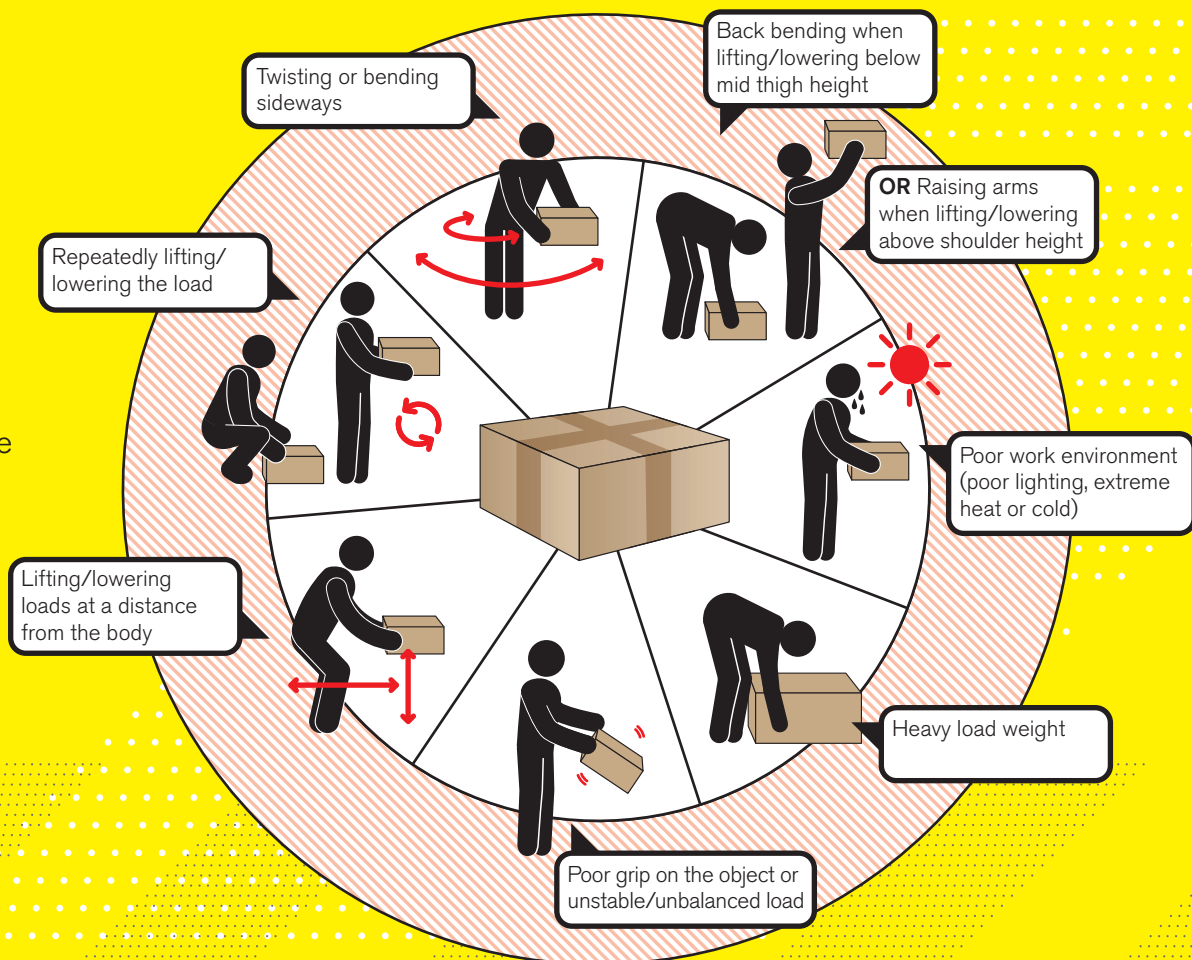
1. are repeatedly performed
2. involve sustained postures
3. require high force to move the load
4. are performed quickly, or
5. involve mobile or unstable loads

The risk of an injury can depend on the postures, movements, forces and on how long or often the task is performed. For example, the risk may be caused by a combination of twisting and lifting at a distance from the body.





When looking at tasks that include lifting and lowering, consider redesigning the task if one or more of the following are present – keeping in mind that the more that are present, the greater the need for redesign:



If you do or see these actions at work you should start questioning why and talking about how you can make the task safer.

- Why does the task have to involve lifting or lowering objects?
- Why is lifting and lowering occurring from the ground or below mid-thigh level or above shoulder height?
- Why is lifting and lowering occurring with an extended forward reach from the body?
- Why is high force needed to lift or lower objects?
- Why is lifting and lowering occurring often or for long periods?

For example, you might discover that people are working outside of the GREEN ZONE because commonly used items are stored on high shelves. This can be addressed by simply moving the items to lower shelves.

Information and training

Employers have to provide employees with information and training on how to perform work safely, including lifting or lowering tasks. For example, providing employees with instruction and training on how to perform work safely in the GREEN ZONE.

Monitoring and reviewing the way work is done

If methods for working in the GREEN ZONE are not being followed they are ineffective. This can occur because:

- employees are under time pressures
 - the risk control is inappropriate for the task, or
 - mechanical aids are poorly maintained.
- Supervision can help identify when, and importantly why, practices are not being followed. Employers must ensure the controls they introduce are effective in eliminating or reducing risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where can I find more information for my industry?

For information on tasks that include lifting and lowering in your industry visit:

**[worksafe.vic.gov.au/
manualhandling](https://worksafe.vic.gov.au/manualhandling)**

