



British Water Cooler Association

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Manual Handling Guidelines
For Bottled Water Coolers

The Role of the BWCA

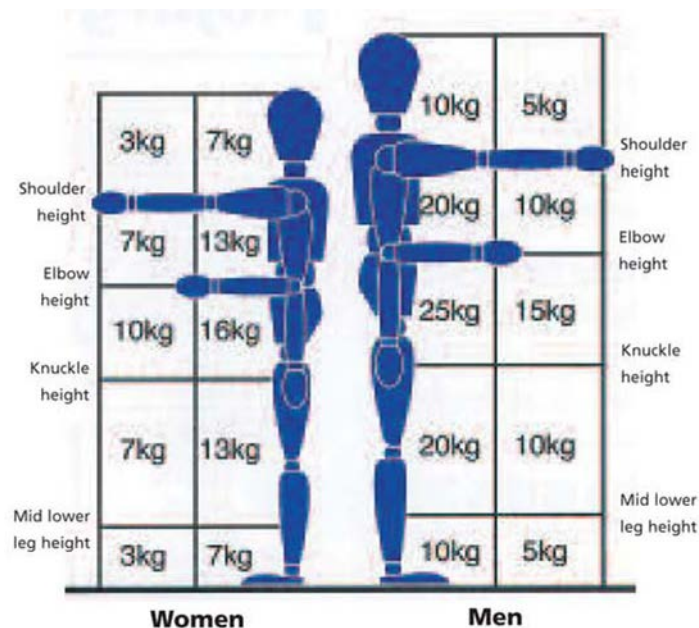
“To ensure the attainment of the highest standards of quality, safety, hygiene and ethical conduct in the water cooler industry through unimpeachable products and services supplied by Members to their customers, in full recognition of the Industry’s environmental responsibilities.”

The BWCA is the UK trade association covering both the bottled water cooler and mains-fed water cooler industry. It is a leading authority on bottled water, water coolers of all types and their maintenance and represents major companies in the industry. It funds technical and microbiological research, promotes the attainment of the highest standards and practices through the implementation of its Code of Practices, annual quality control audits of its members bottling and operating premises, and undertakes continuous compulsory training of its members staff.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 came into force on 1 January 1993 and were subsequently amended in 2002.

These regulations place an obligation to assess all hazardous manual operations in the workplace to reduce the risk of injury and to provide relevant information about the loads to be lifted.

The diagram below shows the guidelines for weight loads and defines a boundary beyond which the risk of potential injury is sufficient to warrant a more detailed assessment.



These guidelines are not legal limits. There is no such thing as a completely “safe” manual handling operation. It is necessary to evaluate each situation on its own merits including factors such as wet floors, obstacles, distance to carry loads, slopes/stairs.

The guidelines indicate that a 12 litre water bottle (13Kg), lifting from above knee height, is suitable for virtually all persons. The guidelines suggest that men are comfortable lifting a 19 litre bottle (20Kg) from above knee height whilst keeping the load close to their body.

Water bottles should not be handled if you are not totally comfortable with the weight of the load.

For more information contact your cooler provider.

GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUES

A risk assessment should be carried out for all persons lifting water bottles and particularly if the persons fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Under 18 Over 55 years of age
- Restricted motion
- Recent or current pregnancy
- Heart or respiratory problems
- History of hernias or back, knee or hip trouble
- Muscular skeletal problems
- Any temporary impairment or disability
- Any other health issue

Any person that is required to put bottles on water coolers should be made aware of and understand the following:

- **Stop, Think and Plan**

Consider where the load is to be moved to and placed and whether handling aids can be used. Consider if others need to assist. Remove the peel-off label from the top of the cap. Grasp the bottle by the neck and base, or neck and handle if applicable. Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible during the lift and at waist height.

- **Position Feet**

Keep feet apart giving a balanced and stable base for lifting. Tight clothing and unsuitable footwear will make this difficult.

- **Adopt Good Posture**

When picking up the bottle from the floor adopt a good posture and bend the knees. Do not kneel. Keep the back straight. Tucking in the chin helps.

- **Firm Grip**

If you need to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do it as smoothly as possible. Once the bottle is securely held, hold head up and look straight ahead not down at the bottle.

- **Turning With Bottle**

When turning with the bottle, do so by shuffling the feet and turning. Do not twist the upper body.

- **Rest Bottle Then Load**

When loading the water bottle on to the cooler, rest the bottle on top of the cooler then adjust to the desired position.

DO NOT LIFT OR HANDLE MORE THAN CAN COMFORTABLY BE MANAGED.

For more information on manual handling visit www.hse.gov.uk