STRAIN FROM REPETITIVE BRICK AND BLOCK LAYING

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

Musculoskeletal strain · bending to low courses · reaching above shoulder · heavy blocks · wrists · pace and rotation

KD-RA-BR-003 Rev A0

Statutory basis: Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 reg 4 — hazardous manual handling is avoided so far as reasonably practicable, starting with the choice of block, and what remains is assessed and reduced; the law sets no weight limit; MHSWR 1999 reg 13 — each worker's capabilities are taken into account when work is given to them; RIDDOR 2013 reg 8 — certain diagnosed upper-limb disorders linked to repetitive work are reportable occupational diseases; CDM 2015 regs 13 and 15. This document is the recorded safe system of work required by HSWA 1974 s.2(2)(a) and MHSWR 1999 regs 3 and 5.

1 DOCUMENT AND PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

RAMS REFERENCE	PROJECT / SITE REF	SITE NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE PREPARED	NEXT REVIEW DATE

CLIENT / PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR	PLANNED START	DURATION	OPERATIVES	SUPERVISING THE WORK

2 SCOPE OF WORKS

The body strain of laying brick and block all day: bending to low courses and to materials on the ground, reaching above shoulder at the top of a lift, twisting between spot board and wall, handling heavy and large-format blocks, trowel and grip work on the wrists, kneeling for footings and DPC courses, and the pace of the work. Body strain in other trades is covered by those trades' documents.

This document does not cover: lifting heavy lintels, padstones and stone units (KD-RAMS-BM-004 and KD-RAMS-BM-005), vibration from cutting and raking tools (KD-RAMS-BM-002 and KD-RAMS-BM-003), and use of the working platform and load-out (KD-RA-BR-005).

SITE-SPECIFIC SCOPE, LOCATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3 RISK ASSESSMENT — SCORE EACH RISK FOR THIS SITE, THEN ADD WHAT IS MISSING

The hazards and controls below are the starting point for this activity, written by a working main contractor. They are not complete for your site until a competent person has scored each risk, added the site-specific hazards, and struck out anything that does not apply. Rate risks High / Medium / Low before and after controls.

1. Lower back injury from bending to low courses and to materials on the ground — *At risk: Bricklayers, labourers*

Controls: Laying is planned to happen between knee and shoulder: materials raised on stands or pallets, spot boards on stands, scaffold lifts raised by the scaffold contractor at the heights the work needs. Nobody picks bricks or blocks from ground level all day.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

2. Shoulder injury from laying above shoulder height at the top of a lift — *At risk: Bricklayers*

Controls: Laying stops when the courses reach shoulder height; the lift is raised, or hop-ups fitted with the guardrails adjusted, by the scaffold contractor before laying continues. Nobody stands on stacked blocks, buckets or tubs to gain height.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

3. Handling heavy and large-format blocks — *At risk: Bricklayers*

Controls: Block weights and sizes taken from the schedule before labour is planned. The lightest block that meets the design is ordered, with half-size blocks or blocks laid flat where the designer agrees, and mechanical placing aids for heavier units. Two-person handling is kept for occasional units, not relied on for laying runs of heavy blocks.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4. Twisting and over-reaching between materials and the wall — *At risk: Bricklayers*

Controls: Stacks split into short runs along the wall, close to where they are laid; spot boards set so the bricklayer turns with the feet, not the spine; the supervisor moves the stack, not the person, when the set-up forces a twist.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

5. Wrist and forearm disorders from trowel work, gripping bricks and tapping in — *At risk: Bricklayers*

Controls: Trowels of a weight and handle size that suit the user; bricks gripped across the face rather than pinched at the ends where the unit allows; laying rotated with other tasks; aches, numbness or swelling reported early and the task reviewed.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

6. Knee injury from kneeling on footings, DPC courses and low work — *At risk: Bricklayers*

Controls: Knee pads or kneeling mats issued and worn; low courses built from a kneeling position only for as long as it takes; materials raised to the kneeling height so the bricklayer is not reaching down as well.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

Approved for issue by: Author — director, UK principal contractor, SMSTS. Not an independent review.
TEMPLATE ONLY. The pre-filled hazards, controls and sequence are a starting point, not a safe system of work. A competent person must adapt this document to the site, score the risks, and brief everyone working under it before work starts.
A RAMS that has not been adapted to the site is not a safe system of work (HSWA 1974 s.2(2)(a); MHSWR 1999 regs 3 and 5). Prepared against legislation current at 10/08/2026.
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7. Pace, long shifts and no rotation — fatigue that turns strain into injury *At risk: Bricklayers, labourers*

Controls: Laying, loading out, pointing and cleaning down rotated through the day; regular breaks taken; the supervisor watches for output targets driving people to skip set-up — moving boards, raising stacks — and corrects it.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

8. Early symptoms ignored until the injury is long-term *At risk: Bricklayers, labourers*

Controls: Aches, pins and needles and stiffness raised at toolbox talks as something to report, not put up with; a report gets the task looked at with the person the same day and an occupational health referral where symptoms persist.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

Site-specific hazards not listed above — every site has at least one:

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK	CONTROLS	INITIAL H/...	RESIDUAL...	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4 METHOD — SEQUENCE OF WORK

01 Before the job, get block and brick weights and sizes from the schedule. Ask the designer or principal contractor for the lightest block that meets the design, half-size blocks or laying flat, and plan mechanical placing aids for heavier units.

02 Agree scaffold lift heights with the scaffold contractor so laying stays between knee and shoulder, and agree when each lift is raised or hop-ups fitted.

03 Load out by machine in short stacks along the wall, raised on the scaffold, close to where the units will be laid.

04 Brief the gang: set-up of boards and stacks, the heavy-block arrangements, rotation and symptom reporting.

05 Set spot boards on stands at a height and position that avoid twisting.

06 Lay low courses on kneeling mats or with knee pads, with the materials raised to the working level.

07 STOP laying when courses reach shoulder height; the lift is raised or hop-ups fitted before work continues. No standing on materials.

08 Handle heavier units with the mechanical placing aid planned for them; two-person handling only for occasional units.

09 Rotate laying with loading out, pointing and cleaning down at the intervals the supervisor sets.

10 The supervisor watches for bending, over-reaching and rushing, and fixes the set-up rather than just telling the person.

11 Anyone reporting pain, numbness or swelling has the task reviewed with them the same day and is referred to occupational health. A doctor's diagnosis of a reportable condition is reported under RIDDOR.

SITE-SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO THE SEQUENCE

5 PLANT, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ☐ Material and spot board stands, raised pallets
- ☐ Mechanical block placing aids
- ☐ Knee pads and kneeling mats
- ☐ Telehandler load-out to the laying position
- ☐ Hop-ups fitted by the scaffold contractor

INSPECTION / THOROUGH EXAMINATION REFS

COSHH ASSESSMENT REFS

6 PPE — THE LAST LINE OF CONTROL, NOT THE FIRST

- ☐ Head protection
- ☐ Safety footwear
- ☐ High visibility
- ☐ Gloves — task-rated
- ☐ Eye protection
- ☐ Hearing protection
- ☐ Knee pads for low work

RPE TYPE, FACE-FIT STATUS, AND ANY OTHER PPE REQUIRED

7 PERMITS REQUIRED BEFORE THIS WORK STARTS

No permit is normally required for this activity. The site's own rules may still require one — check before starting, and record any permit issued below.

PERMITS ISSUED FOR THIS WORK (OR NONE)

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8 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS — COMPLETE FOR THIS SITE

FIRST AIDER AND LOCATION	NEAREST A&E	ASSEMBLY POINT

HOW THE ALARM IS RAISED	EMERGENCY ACCESS FOR THIS WORK AREA	SPILL / ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE

9 BRIEFING RECORD — EVERYONE WORKING UNDER THIS RAMS SIGNS BEFORE STARTING

By signing you confirm the contents of this RAMS have been explained to you, you understand the hazards and controls, and you will work to the sequence stated. Tell the supervisor if the work or the site does not match this document — work stops until it does.

NAME	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE

10 PREPARED AND ACCEPTED

Prepared / adapted for this site by — I confirm I have adapted this document to the site, scored the risks, and that it describes how the work will actually be done.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE / COMPETENCE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Accepted for the site by — principal contractor or site manager review.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Review this RAMS if the work, the site or the law changes, and at least before each new phase of the works. Flatten the completed PDF before filing so the record cannot be silently edited.

R REVISION HISTORY

Every revision of this document, and every review that found nothing to change. The revision on the front of this sheet is the one you are holding — check kubitdocs.com for the current one before use.

Rev	Date	Class	What changed	Authorised by
D0	2026-09-11	first-issue	First issue.	— not yet approved —
A0	2026-09-11	review	Approved for issue by the author. Content unchanged from the reviewed draft; the draft status strip is removed. No independent third-party review has been carried out.	Author — director, UK principal contractor, SMSTS. Not an independent review.

Class: first-issue · material (the law, a control, a field or the scope changed — past buyers are notified) · editorial (wording or layout only) · review (checked, nothing changed) · withdrawal. Revision prefix D = draft, not approved and not for sale; A = approved for issue by the person named, on the date shown.

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