* **Change body position regularly to minimise awkward or static postures.**

**MANUAL GARDENING TASKS**

* **Plan and manage tasks involving forceful exertion or repetitive motions.**
* **Use wheelbarrows or trailers to transport heavy materials and/or equipment.**

## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

◼ Repetition of movement ◼ Awkward posture ◼ Forceful exertion ◼ Vibration /noise

◼ Sprains/strains ◼ Insect bites/stings ◼ Slip/trip/fall ◼ Inhalation of dust/soil

◼ Shock/electrocution ◼ Cuts/lacerations ◼ Sunburn/heatstroke pathogens

#### PRE-OPERATIONAL SAFETY CHECKS

1. Read, understand and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions before using any plant or power tools.
2. Minimise the risk of injury by planning your work:

 **◼** If working alone or in isolation, advise your supervisor of your activities and have a check-in/ communication plan (e.g. carry a mobile phone for emergency communication).

 **◼**  Select equipment to minimise manual handling. Assess how materials and equipment will be moved.

 **◼** Assess the environment you will be working in -identify and control hazards such as moving parts, plant and equipment, utility hazards (gas, electricity, pipes, communications cables), environmental, chemical and biological hazards. Consider any fire ant or other pest requirements when transporting/relocating soil/mulch.

 **◼**  Ensure the work area and points of access/egress are free from obstacles.

 **◼** Make sure that you have enough people to do the job safely (e.g. heavy loads, awkward objects).

 **◼** Allow sufficient time to safely complete the task.

 **◼** Avoid double handling of items or repeated lifting, bending or squatting.

1. Arrange for materials (e.g. soil) to be delivered close to the work area to reduce lifting and repetitive tasks.
2. Work in the cooler parts of the day or in the shade where possible. Be aware of the symptoms of fatigue and heat exhaustion and the factors that lead to heat related illness when working outdoors.

**OPERATIONAL SAFETY CHECKS**

1. Always wear PPE when using power tools/machinery including work boots, eye and hearing protection, and gloves that are suitable for the task and the work environment. Wear sun protective clothing and SPF30+ sunscreen on all exposed skin.
2. Report unsafe working conditions or equipment to your supervisor. Remove damaged equipment from service.
3. Take care when exerting force on an object (push, pull, grasp, manipulate, strike, throw, carry, move, hold or restrain) to prevent overexertion and repetitive injuries resulting in strain and sprain injuries. Avoid extreme or sudden exertion events.
4. Avoid sustained awkward postures (e.g. bending, leaning, over reaching or squatting). Break the task up.
5. Manage tasks that involve vibration, repetition and long duration. Swap grip and stance from left to right regularly to reduce muscle overuse and uneven force across the body.
6. When shovelling, turn your front foot in the direction you want to deposit the shovel's load rather than twisting your body. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and keep the loaded shovel close to your body to keep your balance. Soil (especially when wet) is heavy. Manage wheelbarrow and shovel loads accordingly.
7. Use a wheelbarrow or trailer to transport soil/mulch and equipment.
8. Work within your strength and endurance, pace yourself and take a break when you're tired. Rotate or share tasks where possible to decrease the exertion and duration of activities, especially those that are associated with vibration, tight grip, repetition of movement and awkward posture.

#### HOUSEKEEPING

#### ◼ Return any chemicals, tools or equipment to storage immediately. Do not leave them where students may access them. Dispose of all chemical waste and containers according to the SDS.

#### ◼ Be careful when refuelling a hot engine. Use a funnel to avoid spilling fuel. Refuel in well-ventilated area and only when the engine has cooled.

#### ◼ Always wash your hand thoroughly when you have completed the task. Treat and cover any cuts and scratches.

See also [Schools Officers Folder](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/safety/managing/school-officers), [Schools Officer Sun Safety Factsheet](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sun-safety-schools-officers.pdf) and [Equipment and Machinery page](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/equipment-machinery-resources)

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