

**Subject: MANUAL HANDLING in ADVERSE CONDITIONS**

## **What's Happened?**

An operative has sustained an injury to his left ankle whilst carrying out a manual handling operation.

## **How Did It Happen?**

A three man team were carrying out prep work; normally equipment would be carried to the poles on ATVs but on this occasion the landowner would not allow their use due to the amount of recent rain and subsequent ground conditions. Consequently the equipment was carried by hand across the fields. Whilst carrying a crate of ceramic insulators the operative slipped and fell to the floor causing soft tissue damage to his left ankle area and resulting in considerable pain. The boots worn offered little or no support to the ankle joint.

## **Recommendations and Lessons to be Learnt:**

- Remember to consider the environment you are working in when carrying out your Risk Assessment; what you can safely handle in a dry warm environment on firm ground is different to a cold wet day when you're ankle deep in mud.
- Consider if the task may be delayed until mechanical means may be used.
- Where your assessment identifies that the environment may affect your safe carrying capacity consider how you may alter the load or the manner in which you are to move it.
- Ensure the boots you are wearing are appropriate to the environment in which you are working, all operatives working in conditions such as those detailed above must wear boots that offer support to the ankle joints.
- Ensure boots are fully laced, to ensure that they are offering as much support as possible.
- If you have concerns with regard to the suitability of your current footwear (or any item of supplied PPE) these should be raised with your supervisor.