SAFETY & OPERATIONS STANDARD | REF: HFO-OPS-001

HANDS-FREE OPERATIONS STANDARD

For Lifting, Positioning, and Line-of-Fire Risk Activities

Document Status:	Draft for Internal Review
Applies To:	All Lifting, Positioning & Load-Handling Operations
Scope:	Drilling, Fabrication, Maintenance, Material Handling
Compliance:	Mandatory — Contractors and Employees

This standard establishes mandatory requirements for the elimination of direct hand exposure during load handling, lifting, and positioning activities. It applies across all operational contexts where line-of-fire risk, pinch points, or uncontrolled load movement may be present.

All personnel and contractors engaged in applicable operations are required to comply.

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1. PURPOSE

This standard establishes mandatory requirements to eliminate the exposure of hands to hazards during lifting, positioning, and load-handling activities. It mandates the use of engineered hands-free tools across all applicable operations.

This standard aims to reduce incidents related to:

– Pinch points and crush zones

– Line-of-fire exposure during load movement

– Uncontrolled load swing, drop, or rotation

– Direct hand contact with suspended or unstable loads

2. SCOPE

This standard applies to:

– All lifting and load-handling operations

– All personnel involved in guiding, positioning, or aligning loads

– All contractors and subcontractors performing such activities

Applicable across the following operational contexts:

Operational Context	Typical Activities
Drilling and Rig Operations	Hook alignment, tubular handling, load positioning
Fabrication Yards & Workshops	Equipment installation, structural alignment, material handling
Maintenance Activities	Component removal/installation, confined space handling
Material Handling	Crane operations, warehouse and yard logistics

3. CORE PRINCIPLE

The following principle is the foundation of this standard and shall be applied without exception across all applicable operations:

CORE PRINCIPLE

Hands shall not be used to guide, align, or control loads in any operation where there is a risk of movement, impact, or entrapment.

All such tasks shall be performed using appropriate hands-free safety tools.

4. DEFINITIONS

Hands-Free Tools
Engineered devices designed to allow operators to control, guide, or position loads from a safe distance without direct hand contact with the load or hazard zone.

Line-of-Fire
Any area where a person is exposed to potential injury from moving, falling, or shifting objects, energy releases, or uncontrolled load movement.

Positioning Activity
Any operation involving the alignment, adjustment, or control of a load after lifting, during movement, or during installation.

Drop Zone
The area beneath or adjacent to a suspended load where a person could be struck in the event of load release or equipment failure.

Pinch Point
Any location where a person or part of the body could be caught between a moving object and a stationary surface, or between two moving objects.

5. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Prohibition of Direct Hand Contact

Manual hand contact with suspended, moving, or unstable loads is strictly prohibited under this standard. The following rules apply without exception:

– Hands shall not be placed on, under, or near suspended loads at any time

– Hands shall not be placed between objects, near pinch points, or within load paths

– No part of the body shall enter the drop zone or line-of-fire during load handling

5.2 Mandatory Use of Hands-Free Tools

Hands-free tools shall be used in all applicable operations. The following tasks require the use of an engineered hands-free tool as a minimum:

Task / Operation	Hands-Free Requirement
Guiding suspended loads	Push/pull tool with sufficient reach to maintain safe standoff
Aligning crane hooks	Hook alignment tool; no direct hand contact with hook or line
Controlling load rotation / swing	Tool providing controlled lateral or rotational guidance
Pipe and tubular positioning	Tubular handling tool for stabbing and racking operations
Equipment alignment and installation	Positioning tool to maintain alignment during make-up
Tagline retrieval and management	Retrieval tool; no manual hand wrapping of lines
Valve / lever operation in hazard zones	Extended-reach operation tool

5.3 Minimum Tool Requirements

All hands-free tools deployed under this standard shall meet the following minimum criteria:

Requirement	Description
Reach and Standoff	Tool must provide sufficient reach to maintain the operator outside the line-of-fire
Bi-directional Control	Tool must enable both push and pull control of the load
Material Suitability	Constructed from materials appropriate for the operational environment (e.g., chemical resistance, temperature rating)
Safe Profile	Free from sharp edges, unsafe projections, or features that could create secondary hazards
Controlled Handling	Must allow controlled operation without sudden release, rebound, or unintended load movement
Ergonomic Design	Designed for stable, safe use under operational loads and conditions
Application Specificity	Designed for the specific industrial application (e.g., hook alignment, load positioning, tubular handling)

Requirement	Description
Failure Safety	Where applicable, shall incorporate controlled failure or breakaway features

*Hands-free tools meeting these specifications are widely available across industry. Examples of commercially available engineered systems designed for load control and positioning include the **PSC LoadGuider**, **Stiffy Safety Tool**, and **Shove-It Tool**, among others meeting the defined safety specifications. See Annexure B for a broader reference list of engineered tool systems and applications.*

5.4 Prohibited Practices

PROHIBITED PRACTICES — STRICTLY ENFORCED

The following practices are prohibited under this standard. Violations shall be treated as a safety non-compliance requiring immediate corrective action.

– Use of improvised tools such as rods, pipes, rebars, or fabricated hooks not designed for load control

– Manual pulling or guiding of loads using hands, arms, or body

– Standing within the drop zone or line-of-fire during load handling operations

– Using taglines as a substitute for engineered controlled positioning

– Bypassing hands-free tool requirements on the basis of perceived task simplicity or time pressure

6. APPLICATION AREAS

Hands-free tools shall be used in, but are not limited to, the following operations:

– Crane hook alignment during lift initiation and hook-on

– Suspended load positioning and lateral movement control

– Pipe, tubular, and casing handling during drilling and well operations

– Equipment installation and structural alignment operations

– Tagline retrieval, repositioning, and management

– Valve and lever operation in proximity to hazard zones

– Material handling in confined, restricted, or elevated access areas

– Load rotation control and swing arrest during crane operations

Operations managers and supervisors are responsible for identifying additional tasks within their scope that meet the criteria of this standard, and ensuring hands-free tool requirements are applied accordingly. See Annexure A for detailed application mapping.

7. CONTRACTOR COMPLIANCE

– Contractors shall ensure the availability and use of hands-free tools that meet the defined minimum specifications for all applicable operations performed under contract

– Proof of tool availability and competency shall be provided upon request prior to work commencement

– On-site supervisors shall enforce compliance during all applicable operations

– Non-compliance shall be treated as a safety violation and may result in work stoppage, removal from site, or contract action

– Contract documentation shall reference this standard; see Annexure C for the suggested contract clause

8. TRAINING AND COMPETENCY

All personnel involved in applicable operations shall be trained and competent in the requirements of this standard prior to task commencement. Training shall include:

– Identification of line-of-fire and pinch point hazards in applicable tasks

– Correct selection of hands-free tools for specific operations

– Proper use, care, and inspection of assigned tools

– Recognition and reporting of prohibited practices

– Emergency response for hand injury incidents

Supervisors shall verify competency and ensure consistent implementation across all shifts and crews. Training records shall be maintained and available for audit.

9. INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

Inspection Type	Frequency	Action if Defect Found
Pre-use visual inspection	Before each use	Remove from service; tag and quarantine
Supervisor spot-check	During operations	Correct immediately; record observation

Inspection Type	Frequency	Action if Defect Found
Periodic formal inspection	Monthly minimum	Log inspection; remove defective tools
Post-incident inspection	Following any hand injury event	Full removal and investigation

Damaged, worn, modified, or improvised tools shall be removed from service immediately and not returned to use until formally inspected and cleared.

10. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLE

If a task requires hands near a moving, unstable, or impact-prone object, it must be replaced with an engineered safety tool. Task complexity or time pressure does not justify deviation from this requirement.

Implementation shall follow the steps below:

Step	Action	Detail
1	Identify	Map all tasks involving direct hand exposure to loads, pinch points, or line-of-fire. Engage field crews to identify tasks not captured in standard procedures.
2	Replace	For each identified task, select the appropriate engineered hands-free tool. Reference Annexure A for application-to-tool mapping guidance.
3	Integrate	Embed hands-free tool requirements into task procedures, risk assessments, permit-to-work documentation, and pre-task briefings.
4	Reinforce	Conduct toolbox talks, field observations, and supervisor-led reinforcement to establish consistent usage across all teams and contractors.
5	Review	Track compliance observations, near-miss reports, and feedback to continuously improve tool selection and application.

11. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

– All hand-related incidents and near-misses shall be reviewed to identify where additional hands-free controls could have prevented the event

– Field personnel shall be actively engaged in identifying additional tasks meeting the criteria of this standard

– Tool performance, ergonomics, and application suitability shall be reviewed periodically based on operational feedback

– This standard shall be reviewed at minimum annually, or following any significant hand injury incident within scope

ANNEXURE A

APPLICATION MAPPING & IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

The following table maps common field tasks to the associated risk category, recommended hands-free approach, and applicable tool type. This mapping shall be used during pre-task planning, procedure development, and supervisor review.

Application / Task	Risk Category	Hands-Free Approach	Tool Type
Crane hook alignment	Impact / Crush	Push/pull hook from safe standoff; no direct contact with hook or line	Hook alignment / load guide tool
Suspended load positioning	Line-of-fire / Drop	Control load travel and orientation using rigid push/pull tool outside drop zone	Load positioning tool
Pipe / tubular handling (stabbing, racking)	Pinch / Rolling	Guide tubular into position using purpose-designed handling tool; maintain standoff	Tubular guiding tool
Tagline retrieval & management	Entanglement / Pull-in	Retrieve and reposition taglines using hooked retrieval tool; no hand wrapping	Tagline retrieval tool
Equipment installation & alignment	Pinch between mating surfaces	Maintain alignment with rigid tool; hands clear of interface during bolt-up	Positioning / alignment tool
Valve / lever operation in hazard zones	Stored energy / Pressure	Operate remotely using extended-reach purpose-designed tool	Extended-reach / valve tool
Small component & part handling	Finger entrapment in tooling	Insert, position, and retrieve components using finger-safe handling tool	Finger-safe handling tool
Load rotation & swing control	Uncontrolled swing / Crush	Arrest swing and control rotation using push/pull tool from outside swing radius	Load guide tool
Material handling in confined spaces	Restricted withdrawal	Use compact remote-reach tool to guide materials in access-restricted areas	Compact positioning tool
Rigging & sling positioning	Pinch during sling placement	Position and adjust rigging components using tool; withdraw before load taken up	Positioning tool

Implementation Priorities

– Prioritise identification of high-frequency and high-risk operations first

– Standardise tool usage across all teams and contractor groups performing the same task type

– Ensure field personnel participate in task mapping to capture informal or non-procedurised activities

– Review mapping on a periodic basis and update following any change in task scope or method

ANNEXURE B

REFERENCE EXAMPLES — ENGINEERED HANDS-FREE TOOL SYSTEMS

The following table provides reference examples of commercially available engineered hands-free tool systems that have been deployed across rig, fabrication, and industrial settings. This list is not exhaustive. Any tool meeting the minimum requirements defined in Section 5.3 of this standard may be used.

This framework is informed by practical deployment of engineered hands-free safety tools across rigs, fabrication yards, and metal processing facilities. Technical support is available from PSC Hand Safety India Pvt. Ltd.

Tool System	Primary Application	Key Functional Features
PSC LoadGuider®	Crane hook alignment; Suspended load positioning	Rigid push/pull construction; suitable for hook approach, lateral positioning, and load rotation control
PSC Load-it®	Component positioning; Confined space handling	Compact form factor; controlled push/pull in restricted access environments
PSC SafeGuider®	Equipment alignment; Flange / coupling make-up	Designed to maintain component alignment during bolt-up without hand placement in interface
PSC TRT Tool	Tagline retrieval & repositioning	Engineered hook geometry for controlled engagement and release; prevents hand wrapping in lines
PSC TubularGuider®	Pipe / tubular handling; Drilling & well operations	Purpose-designed for stabbing and racking; maintains standoff during tubular run-in
PSC FingerSaver®	Small component handling; Machinery interfaces	Finger-safe design for insertion and retrieval of components in tooling, presses, and machines
PSC LiftAssist®	Awkward lift assists; Manual repositioning	Mechanical lift-assist; reduces direct hand contact during load manipulation and placement
PSC GasGrab®	Valve / lever operation; Hazard zone access	Extended-reach; designed for remote operation of valves and controls in hazardous process environments
PSC Ezy-Lift®	Repetitive handling; Fabrication / workshop	Controlled pick-up and placement; reduces wrist and hand exposure in high-frequency handling tasks

Note: Inclusion in this table does not constitute sole-source specification. Equivalent tools meeting the requirements of Section 5.3 are acceptable. Tool selection shall be made on the basis of application suitability, not brand preference.

ANNEXURE C

SUGGESTED CONTRACT CLAUSE

The following clause is recommended for inclusion in all contracts covering work within the scope of this standard. Legal and procurement teams should review and adapt as necessary for jurisdiction and contract type.

HANDS-FREE OPERATIONS — CONTRACT REQUIREMENT

The Contractor acknowledges and agrees that the use of hands for guiding, aligning, or controlling suspended or moving loads is prohibited in all operations performed under this contract.

The Contractor shall ensure that appropriate hands-free tools, meeting the minimum specifications set out in the Principal's Hands-Free Operations Standard (or equivalent), are available and in use for all such operations prior to work commencement.

All Contractor personnel engaged in applicable activities shall be trained and competent in the correct use of the required tools. Proof of training and tool availability shall be provided to the Principal's representative upon request.

Non-compliance with this requirement shall be treated as a safety violation and may result in the suspension of works, removal of personnel from site, or such other remedy as the Principal may determine in accordance with the terms of this contract.

Notes on Application

– This clause should be tailored by legal counsel to reflect applicable jurisdiction and contract law

– The clause may be included by reference to the full Hands-Free Operations Standard document

– Contractor pre-qualification processes should verify tool availability and competency records prior to contract award where this standard is applicable