**Handling of Augers, Casings and Rods for Mini-Piling and other Specialist Geotechnical Operations**

Historically, handling of augers, casings and rods during mini-piling and other specialist geotechnical operations has been undertaken by manual labour. This task involves lifting, moving and positioning often heavy components during the drilling process. Analysis of accident reports has shown that this is a high risk activity and there is evidence that this heavy manual labour and awkward postures are all risk factors in the potential development of Musculoskeletal Disorders. In addition members have experienced a significant number of accidents where operatives hands have been trapped and damaged in the process.

Modern thinking stresses the importance of an ergonomic approach to remove or reduce the risk of developing a manual handling injury. The ergonomic approach looks at manual handling as a whole. It takes into account a range of factors, including the nature of the task, the load, the working environment and individuals’ capability.

The Federation of Piling Specialists (FPS) promotes best practice to ensure that its Members maintain the highest standards of safety. In addition, as one of its goals, the FPS has always been a driving force in driving industry safety standards forward. The FPS has established an agreed guidance that wherever practicable, handling of augers, casings and rods during mini-piling and other specialist geotechnical operations shall be achieved by either of the following methods:

* A mechanised tool handling system be fitted to the rig, for example; a carousel, magazine

or

* A mechanised tool handling device that can be attached to supporting equipment such as an excavator’s quick-hitch.

Members are working on sharing best practices both with each other and with machine manufacturers to address this key issue.