



Ergonomics

An Overview

[Name], [Title]

[Company] [Address]

T: [Main Telephone] **DD:** [Direct Phone] **E:** [Email]

Ergonomics overview

Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker. Designing work stations and tools to reduce work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can help workers stay healthy and companies to reduce or eliminate the high costs associated with MSDs.

Who is Covered?

There are no specific ergonomics regulations, although OSHA will continue to cite ergonomic injuries under the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Section 5. All employees are covered by OSHA under this section.

Causes of MSDs

Prolonged exposure to ergonomic risk factors can cause MSDs. Conditions likely to cause MSD problems include:

- Exerting excessive force.
- Excessive repetition of movements that can irritate tendons and increase pressure on nerves.
- Awkward postures, or unsupported positions that stretch physical limits, can compress nerves and irritate tendons.
- Static postures, or positions that a worker must hold for long periods of time, can restrict blood flow and damage muscles.
- Motion, such as increased speed or acceleration when bending and twisting, can increase the amount of force exerted on the body.
- Compression, from grasping sharp edges like tool handles, can concentrate force on small areas of the body, reduce blood flow, nerve transmission and damage tendon sheaths.
- Inadequate recovery time due to overtime, lack of breaks and failure to vary tasks, leave inadequate time for tissue healing.

MSDs can affect nearly all tissue in the body: nerves, tendons, tendon sheaths and muscles. The most frequently affected areas of the body are arms and the back.

Employee Training

There are no specific training requirements for ergonomics. However, employees who have been trained to identify and avoid ergonomic hazards are better able to avoid those hazards, leading to a safer workplace. To get the most out of an ergonomics program, an employer can train workers on:

- Common MSDs and their signs and symptoms.
 - The importance of reporting MSDs, and signs and symptoms, as soon as possible.
 - How to report MSDs in the workplace.
 - Risk factors and work activities associated with MSDs hazards.
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Training Tips

- Using the employee handout, define ergonomics.
- Provide employees with information on MSDs and their signs and symptoms.
- Stress the need for early reporting, and explain the system to report MSDs, signs and symptoms of MSDs, and MSD hazards.

For More Information See:

Occupational Safety and Health Act, Section 5. Duties—General Duty Clause

Ergonomics Overview Handout

About 1.8 million workers report musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis and back injuries each year. About 600,000 of those workers need to take time off work because of those injuries.

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) occur when the physical capabilities of the worker do not match the physical requirements of the job. Prolonged exposure to ergonomic risk factors can cause damage to a worker's body and lead to WMSDs.

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MSD Risk Factors

We often think of ergonomic problems being associated with your computer or mouse, but the fact is there are many repetitive motions that can cause MSD conditions.

Conditions that are likely to cause MSDs include:

- Force
- Repetition
- Awkward Postures
- Static Postures
- Quick Motions
- Compressed or Contact Stress
- Vibration
- Cold Temperatures

What types of Work are Likely to Cause MSDs?

- Manual handling
- Manufacturing and production
- Heavy lifting
- Twisting movements
- Long hours of working in awkward positions

How do I know if I have an MSD?

- Numbness in your fingers or thighs
- Difficulty moving your fingers
- Stiff joints
- Back pain



An awkward and static position can lead to an ergonomic injury.



Constantly bending over and holding the awkward position to work can also lead to MSDs.

**USE APPROPRIATE
ENGINEERING CONTROLS
AND PROPER WORK
PRACTICES TO ALLEVIATE
YOUR RISK OF MSDS.**

Ergonomics - Overview Sign-Off Sheet

The employees of Company Name, have taken part in a training session on Ergonomics Overview. The session covered:

- The definition of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs).
- The signs and symptoms of WMSDs.
- The importance of early reporting, risk factors, jobs and activities associated with MSDs.

DATE OF TRAINING: _____

FACILITY: _____

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME

Supervisor's Signature

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