

GUIDELINE for Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention PROGRAM

Organization Name

Subject: Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention Program

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Date Reviewed:

Commitment Statement

This *organization* is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff. Our organization will demonstrate its commitment by providing financial, physical and human resources to ensure that all staff understand and are aware of the risk factors associated with MSD, and will provide appropriate ergonomic equipment where possible, for MSD prevention.

This policy applies to day-to-day activities of all staff.

Goals

- To increase MSD awareness
- To decrease the risk of MSD
- To promote and support the health and safety of all employees
- To provide equipment, resources and effective training

Objectives

- To ensure all staff are educated about MSD risk factors and prevention
- To conduct risk assessments to identify the presence of MSD risks
- To control MSD risks through application of controls
- To integrate MSD prevention strategies proactively as well as reactively

Definitions:

Awkward Posture: Any fixed or constrained body position that overloads muscles, tendons, or joints. Generally, the more a joint deviates from the neutral position the more the posture is considered to be 'awkward' and the greater the risk of injury.

Neutral Posture: are those in which the muscles, tendons, and joints function optimally and require the least amount of effort to maintain.

Static Posture: a body position that requires sustained physical effort, without joint movement.

Force: Force is generated through muscular effort during lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying tasks. When doing 'work' the body uses muscles to generate this force to allow for movements of the body.

Repetition: A task that uses the same muscles repeatedly. Repetition may be measured in terms of minutes, hours or work day (e.g. 3 per minute, 25 per hour, 30 times per shift). The level of risk depends on frequency of repetition, time for rest/recovery, speed of motion, postures required and amount of force required.

Physical Demands Descriptions (PDD): a process to document the overall various physical attributes of a job. A well documented PDD identifies force, posture, repetition, and duration of tasks.

Ergonomics: “Ergonomics is the science of fitting the task to the worker by balancing the job demands with the capabilities of the human. “The profession applies theory, principles, data, methods, and analysis to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance”. (Association of Canadian Ergonomists, 2006)

Roles and Responsibilities of Workplace Parties

All staff are expected to comply with the outlined policy and procedures.

Employer

- Enforce the policy, procedures and program.
- Provide equipment, necessary resources and initial and ongoing staff training.
- Maintain the MSD Prevention Program through Continuous Quality Improvement.

- Annually evaluate and update the program.

Managers

- Enforce program through regular monitoring strategies.
- Conduct accident/incident investigations associated with MSD incident/injury reports.
- Report all findings of investigations senior management.
- Ensure all staff are educated in MSD symptoms and proper equipment use.
- Encourage staff to report symptoms of MSD early.
- Respond to staff reports of MSD symptoms promptly.
- Access assistance in implementing MSD controls when solutions are not immediately identified
- Maintain education records.
- Ensure all new staff receive general and specific orientation to the MSD policy and program.
- Maintain ergonomic equipment assigned to their department.
- Include the auditing of worker practice in the planned and unplanned inspections and report on findings to senior management.
- Take every reasonable precaution for the protection of the worker.

Employee

- Comply with policy and procedures at all times;
- Participate in regular education as established by the organization.
- Report any unsafe acts, hazards, equipment problems, or any other unsafe tasks immediately to the supervisor.
- Report any incidents, accidents, and near misses to the supervisor immediately and co-operate in the investigation as required by management.

Joint Health and Safety Committee

- Review incident/accident investigation reports.
- Review policy and program annually.
- Make recommendations in writing to management.
- Assess the feasibility of a MSD sub-committee one which would focus solely on MSD prevention.

Procedures

JHSC - Shall incorporate MSD risks in monthly workplace inspections.

Preplacement Screening – Provide potential new employees with documented information on the essential duties of their job (physical demands descriptions (PDD), pre-placement health review sample letter. Discuss with the employee if there are any physical limitations that would prevent them from performing these duties.

Potential new employees who are unable to perform essential job duties should be referred to their physician for a functional abilities assessment.

Orientation - Ensure MSD education for new workers. Education includes awareness, MSD definitions, and reporting of incidents and risks. Department specific orientation shall include specific MSD hazards, proper use of ergonomic equipment, set up of workstations and work organization strategies.

MSD Hazard reporting – As per the Human Resources policy, employees are to report MSD hazards, and ensure MSD incident reporting is consistent.

MSD Incident reporting – Ensure positive reinforcement of workers reporting MSD signs and symptoms.

Ongoing MSD inspections - Managers are expected to include MSD hazard identification within their routine inspections.

MSD Investigation – Managers are expected to incorporate MSD prevention within the investigation process for MSD incidents.

Referral for ergonomic assessment – When identified ergonomic hazards and risks through investigations, inspections, and reports from workers, provide a documented request to the Occupational Health & Safety Department for an ergonomic consultation either through in-house, the JHSC, or ergonomics professional.

Purchasing – Where appropriate, prior to decisions being made about the purchase of new equipment or new furniture – worker input and ergonomic features shall be considered. Whenever possible, items should be trialed for no less than 1 week's time to ensure compatibility to MSD risk reduction.

Return to Work (RTW) - Develop physical demands descriptions (PDD) for jobs at high risk for MSD and incorporate the analysis in job descriptions. Information obtained from the PDD can be used for employee return to work following an injury to determine if the physical demands of the job match the workers current capabilities.

Building Design – Whenever the workplace is being re-developed, ergonomic considerations shall be integrated into the design of the new work environment.

Maintenance of Equipment -Maintain all equipment in safe operating condition. Ensure complete and accurate documentation of preventive maintenance.

Education

Orientation - Ensure MSD education for new employees.

Ongoing – Department specific annual review of MSD risk factors and controls shall be reviewed with staff. Education should include MSD awareness, anatomy, biomechanics, risk factors, and signs and symptoms.

Evaluation

The MSD program will be evaluated annually. The following indicators:

- Incident Reports
- JHSC Minutes
- Physical Demands Descriptions
- Absenteeism statistics
- Employee Discomfort Survey results

Any changes to the program will be documented and communicated immediately to all affected staff and management.