



Fitting Jobs to People

Ergonomics is the science of fitting jobs to the people who work in them. The goal of our ergonomics program is to reduce work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). Whenever and wherever you find ergonomic hazards, YCPARMIA can help you respond promptly and assist you in taking immediate steps to reduce those hazards. We can also help employees get the necessary attention from a health care professional as soon as possible. Here are some ways to reduce the risk of MSDs in your workplace:

- **Report any signs or symptoms of MSDs.** Talk to your supervisor as soon as you start feeling symptoms of work-related MSDs. (See below for causes and symptoms.)
- **Share your suggestions for fixing ergonomic problems.** Talk to your supervisor and tell him or her about your ideas. If all of us work together, we can minimize or eliminate the causes of MSDs in our workplace.
- **Take ergonomic training seriously.** Training is designed to help protect you from painful injuries. In training you will learn how to recognize ergonomic hazards and how to take action to avoid them and protect your health.
- **Follow work rules and procedures and take your breaks.**

What are the causes of MSDs?

Workplace MSDs are caused by exposure to the following risk factors:

- **Repetition.** Performing the same motion over and over again places stress on muscles and tendons.
- **Forceful exertions.** Forced physical effort required to perform a task or to control equipment or tools.
- **Awkward postures.** Awkward postures include repeated or prolonged reaching, twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, working overhead with hands or arms, or holding fixed positions.
- **Contact stress.** Pressing the body against a hard surface or sharp edge can result in placing too much pressure on nerves, tendons, and blood vessels.
- **Vibration.** Operating vibrating tools such as sanders, grinders, chippers, drills, and saws for extended periods of time, can lead to nerve damage.

What are the symptoms of MSDs?

Workers suffering from MSDs may experience less strength for gripping and less range of motion. In extreme cases, a person may experience loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks.

Here are some common symptoms to watch out for:

- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs
- Swelling, inflammation, burning sensation
- Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, knees, and joints
- Fingers or toes turning white
- Stiffness or pain in back or neck



Handling Emergencies

When a co-worker is injured, you have to act fast and effectively:

- Call for medical help *immediately*
- Know where to find first-aid kits/ AED's
- Check to see if the victim is breathing
- If you've been trained, administer CPR
- Don't move an injured person, except if necessary to save the person's life from immediate danger
- Bring help to the victim; don't bring the victim to the help
- Don't give any medication without a doctor's supervision
- Wait for emergency medical assistance if you are unsure what to do

Keep in mind: When administering first aid, you should take "universal precautions." Universal precautions means treating all blood and body fluids as though they are infected, and take all precautions necessary to avoid direct contact.

The most common means of avoiding direct contact is to use the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE that may be needed includes gloves, face masks or goggles with side shields, and protective clothing.

Even though the actual risks of blood borne pathogen infections are fairly small, it's very important to take these precautions if there's any question at all about the possibility of exposure when giving emergency first aid.

Off-the-job Safety Statistics

Many of us are safety-conscious at work, but when we get home, we forget to use some of the same precautions.

- Off-the-job accidents account for 25 percent more lost work days by people than accidents on the job.
- Of all off-the-job deaths, over 60 percent are motor vehicle accidents. The rest occur at home or in public places.
- After motor vehicle accidents, falls from ladders are a leading cause of off-the-job injuries.

