**ERGONOMICS PROGRAM**

**oFFICE AND REMOTE WORKSITE WELLNESS**

**A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated**

Prepared by ESM Solutions, Inc.   
This policy is a merely a guideline and does not guarantee compliance with all applicable Federal, State or Local OSHA standards. It is solely the responsibility of the Employer to make sure that their Risk Management and/or Safety Program is compliant with all applicable laws. © 2020, All Rights Reserved

SAMPLE PROGRAM

1. Ergonomics Program
2. Introduction

The purpose of our [Company]’s Ergonomics Program is to prevent risk exposures related to repetitive motion injuries. This can be achieved through a combination of workplace training, evaluation of workstations and work practices, as well as the implementation of sound ergonomic and wellness strategies.

1. Policy Statement

Our [Company] has established an Ergonomics Program for all employees, intended to minimize the extent and severity of occupational injuries and illnesses arising from repeated biomechanical stresses due to repetitive motion hazards.

1. References

Title 8, Chapter 7, Section 5110. Repetitive Motion Injuries

1. Purpose

The purpose of our ergonomics program is to institute strategies that will modify and enhance work processes that contribute to repetitive motion injuries and illnesses. The major program elements will include:

* Work analysis
* Hazard prevention and control
* Education and training
* Medical management

1. Objectives

Our [Company] has developed the following ergonomic program objectives:

* To resolve work hazards before occupational injuries and illnesses occur through an analysis of:
* Employees workstations
* Tools and equipment
* Work environments
* Work methods

To adapt job and work environments to match the capabilities and limitations of the employee.

1. Scope

This program is applicable to all employees. It is the responsibility of management and each individual employee to implement and enforce the Ergonomics Program. Management and employee involvement are necessary in decisions which affect worker safety and health, and is critical to the success of the program.

1. Definitions

Ergonomics: The study of the relationship between people, their work and their physical work environment. The major goal of ergonomics is to fit the job to the individual and promote healthy and safe work practices.

Ergonomic Stressors: Poor workplace designs can present ergonomic risk factors called stressors. These stressors may include the following: *Repetition* – the number of motions or movements that are performed per cycle or per shift; *Force* – the power of the muscles used to produce motion in order to perform necessary activities such as lifting, grasping, pinching, pushing, etc.; *Extreme Postures* – when muscles are required to work at a level near or at their maximum capacity.

Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD): An injury or illness of the soft tissues of the upper extremity, shoulders and neck, lower back, and lower extremity that is primarily caused or exacerbated by workplace risk factors, such as sustained and repeated exertions or awkward postures. (Examples include: tendonitis, epicondylitis, rotator cuff syndrome, low-back pain, etc.)

Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI): Also known as repetitive stress injuries (RSI), an RMI is a type of stress injury that results from repetitive motions such as frequent bending or sustained awkward positioning performed over extended periods of time without allowing for sufficient rest. Examples of RMI are medical conditions resulting from repeated use of a body part.

Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs): are a class of musculoskeletal disorders involving irritation to the tendons, tendon sheaths, and the related bones, muscles and nerves of the hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, neck and back. The most frequently occurring occupationally induced disorders in this class include Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow), Tendonitis, Tenosynovitis, Synovitis, Stenosing Tenosynovitis of the finger, and lower back pain.

1. Ergonomics / Safety Committee

The Safety Manager, and the Safety Committee shall be a cross-functional team consisting of representatives from Safety, Facilities, Operations Supervisors and/or Management.

1. Management Commitment and Employee Involvement

Management Responsibilities

* Management will support an employee suggestion procedure which will allow employees to bring their concerns to management and get feedback without fear of reprisal.
* Management will support a procedure which will encourage the early reporting of signs and symptoms of Repetitive Motion Injury exposures.
* Management will support the Safety Committee or designee which has the required skills to identify and analyze jobs for ergonomic stress and which is capable of making recommendations for solutions.
* Management is committed to providing adequate authority and resources to all responsible parties, so that assigned responsibilities are met.
* Management is committed to assign and communicate the responsibility for the various aspects of the ergonomics program so that all managers, supervisors, and employees involved know what is expected of them.
* Management will support a policy that places safety and health on the same level of importance as production. The responsible implementation of this policy requires management to integrate production processes and safety and health protection to assure that this protection is integral to the daily production activity within the facility.

Safety Manager Responsibilities

* Assists with developing the written ergonomics program, which complies with Cal/OSHA’s standard.
* Identifies tasks and work environments where potential repetitive motion injuries exposures exist.
* Assists with providing training and tools to all employees on the risks associated with repetitive motion injuries at [Company].

Managers and Supervisors

* Responsible for providing new and existing employees with a safe work environment
* Ensure new hires and employees who have moved to a new workstation complete a ergonomic self-evaluation
* Consider including the ergonomic self-evaluation in the department’s orientation process
* Participate in any on-site ergonomic evaluations
* Implement ergonomic recommendations/process timely
* Follow up with Human Resources, Facilities and/or Purchasing if necessary
* Department is responsible for the cost of ergonomic changes
* Follow up with employee after corrections implemented
* Ensure that the requirements in the ergonomics program are implemented within their department
* Ensure that affected personnel are trained and follow ergonomic recommendations provided by the safety manager or designee
* Works with the Safety Manager to ensure department employees are provided the appropriate ergonomic tools to minimize the potential for RMIs
* Maintains vigilance of department’s ergonomics exposures and identifies potential RMIs

Employee Responsibilities

* Employees will provide feedback to the ergonomic committee when the first signs of repetitive motion exposures are identified, or injuries are experienced.
* Employees will work with the Safety Manager, their Supervisor or ergonomics program designee during the work analysis period. Once change has been recommended, the employee will implement the recommendations made. If the change does not resolve the problem, the employee will notify their supervisor and/or safety manager and work with them until the problem has been resolved. The employees are encouraged to report any ergonomic hazard identified immediately.

1. Problem Area Identification

Two methods will be used to identify problem areas.

* Cumulative Trauma Disorder injuries
* Ergonomic assessment trends

Once an upward trend has been identified in an area or department, the Safety Manager or designee will target the area for review in order to eliminate the root cause of the increase.

1. Employee and Supervisor Suggestions

Employee and supervisor suggestions and complaints will also be solicited and analyzed. The information will be provided to the Safety Manager, Safety Committee or designee via a form entitled *Request for Ergonomic Assessment*. When an issue has been identified, a work analysis will be performed.

1. Work Analysis

The first step in the work analysis is to inform the employee of what to expect. The program and purpose of the workstation analysis will be explained. Three questions should be answered prior to the start of the analysis.

1. What are the goals and intent of the work analysis?
2. Who will be involved?
3. Exactly what is going to happen or be looked at?

The goal of the work analysis is to identify the following problems:

* Work tasks which involve awkward movements
* Tasks which involve excessive movements
* Wasted motion or energy
* Poor operation flow
* Work tasks that present the potential for psychological stress
* Cumulative Trauma Disorder factors
* Need for automation
* Need for tooling/hardware changes
* Need for work method changes
* Employee-generated changes in the workplace

The data for the task analysis will be collected through a variety of methods.

* Ergonomic QuickChecks
* Ergonomic Workstation Evaluation
* Interviews
* Direct Observation
* Measurement of risk factors
* Evaluation of worker capability

The primary methods will be questionnaires/checklists, interviews, and direct observation. The Safety Committee or designee will review the Ergonomic QuickChecks or Workstation Evaluation forms and the Job Task Description prior to performing a worksite analysis.

1. Ergonomic Checklists and Reviews

* Ergonomic QuickCheck - A QuickCheck form will be completed when a workstation analysis is performed. This form should be completed with all new hires and completed semi-annually with all employees
* Job Task Description Review - A review of the employee’s job description prior to a work analysis will be conducted. The purpose will be to identify problems associated with the task, component/assembly issues, computer set-up, etc. The purpose will be to give the ergonomic assessor advanced information on the job to be analyzed.
* Workstation Assessment Form – This comprehensive workstation assessment form will be utilized on employees who are experiencing discomfort while conducting their tasks. This form will help [Company] to determine the root cause of the discomfort and assist with developing a corrective solution.

1. Interviews and Observation

Employee interviews and observations are critical to problem identification and solving. During the work analysis, the employee will be a primary focal point. During the workstation assessment, the employee will be asked questions concerning the work performed, problems encountered, and improvements the operator feels could be made to better the worksite set-up.

The Ergonomics QuickCheck or comprehensive Workstation Evaluation Form will also be reviewed and discussed.

1. Direct Observation

Direct observation of the worker, work tasks and the environment will be used to identify causes of Cumulative Trauma Disorders. During the observation period, the task will be monitored for the following potential causes of Cumulative Trauma Disorders.

* Awkward Positions
* High Task Repetition
* High Force Required
* Mechanical Stress Points
* Poor Work Station Design
* Vibration Sources
* Poor Work Habits

The state of the workstation before and after the work analysis will be documented and photographed and maintained by the Safety Manager, Supervisor or designee.

1. Work Analysis Follow-up Requirements

Once a work analysis has been performed, a follow-up report summarizing the results of the worksite analysis and corrective action plan will be written and distributed by the Safety Manager, Supervisor or designee. The supervisor will be present when the review is completed.

1. Hazard Prevention and Control

The focus of this section will be to ensure ergonomic hazards are prevented. This will be accomplished through effective design of the workstation, tools and tasks. The goal will be to focus the activity on making the job fit the person.

* **Engineering Controls -** Engineering controls involve altering the physical items in the workplace, including actions such as modifying the workstation, obtaining different equipment, or changing tools. The focus of engineering controls involves identifying the underlying stressor and eliminating it through changing the physical environment.
  + For example, a video display terminal worker who sustains a potential shoulder/neck injury from long-term typing may need forearm supports or a keyboard tray to reduce the long-term, static exertion of neck/shoulder muscles.
  + Engineering controls are the preferred method of risk control because they permanently reduce or eliminate the risk. Changes are made to the workstations, tools, and/or equipment that alter the physical composition of the work area or process.
* **Administrative or Work Practice Controls *-*** Administrative controls involve altering work organization. These approaches usually are less expensive than engineering controls but are less dependable.
  + Examples of administrative controls include:
    - rotating workers
    - increasing the frequency/duration of breaks
    - assigning a second worker to assist in performing select tasks
    - ensuring proper work techniques are followed
    - conditioning workers for the physical exertion of task demands
    - enlarging job responsibilities such that the same task is not repeatedly performed
    - enacting a preventive maintenance program for mechanical and power tools and equipment
    - developing a housekeeping program
    - limiting overtime work
* **Work Practice Controls -**Work practice controls involve training and encouraging a specific method of task performance to reduce worker exposure to the ergonomic risk. Employees/Supervisors will be trained on proper work posture. Once an employee has been trained, the supervisor will monitor the area for improper work posture.
  + An example of work practice control is training workers in proper lifting techniques.

1. Monitoring

The Supervisor/Manager will enforce the ergonomics program and encourage employee participation in completing workstation exercises and microbreaks. The purpose of the program is to help eliminate the static loading on the worker’s body. Short stretches and exercises should be performed every hour except when a break or lunch occurs.

The Supervisor/Manager will monitor the area for the implementation of the work analysis recommendations. The Supervisor/Manager, Safety Manager or designee will perform regular monitoring of all levels of the operation to help ensure that employees are practicing proper work technique per their ergonomics training.

1. Adjustments/Modifications

Work practice controls will be modified to keep pace with the dynamics of the workplace.

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment will be provided on a case by case basis. This equipment includes wrist rests, screen glare guards, lumbar support pillows, footrests, ergonomic chairs, etc.

This equipment should accommodate the physical requirements of the worker and should not contribute to extreme postures and excessive force.

All physician recommendations will be reviewed and implemented as necessary.

Braces, splints, back belts and other similar devices are not PPE. These will not be assigned to a worker without proper training by the Safety Manager.

1. Housekeeping

Employees will be encouraged to keep personal items and unused equipment/parts outside of the neutral reach zone. Clutter can contribute to poor posture and potentially repetitive motion injuries.

1. Stretching Program

Management will recommend employees working in designated areas to participate in a stretching and exercise program. The stretching program is a wellness program designed to eliminate the effects of sustained and awkward postures.

Custom stretching may be requested through our Medical Provider for those with physical restrictions.

Stretches should be performed every hour except when a break or lunch occurs. It should be noted that the stretching program shall be performed during overtime periods.

1. Medical Management

This system will concentrate on observing ergonomic related activities, employee training and education, early reporting of symptoms, appropriate medical treatment, accurate recordkeeping, and the evaluation of Cumulative Trauma Disorder trends throughout our facility and remote worksites.

1. Periodic Area Reviews

In order to identify and eliminate potential problems, facility walk-throughs or remote worksite reviews may be conducted by the Safety Committee, designee or Safety Manager. This will allow the team to remain knowledgeable about operations, work practices, identify potential light duty jobs and to maintain contact with employees with regards to our ergonomics program.

A written report will be generated by a designated lead member, which outlines the area surveyed, risk factors identified, and actions initiated to correct problems.

When risk factors are identified, a follow-up walk-through may be conducted to ensure corrective action was implemented.

The report will be kept on file by the Safety Manager.

1. Annual Survey

An annual survey may be conducted in the facility to measure employee awareness of work-related disorders, and to report the location, frequency and duration of any identified discomfort. The surveys will not include employee’s personal identifiers. This is to help encourage employee participation.

The survey will be used to identify areas or jobs where potential Cumulative Trauma Disorders exist.

1. Reporting Early Symptoms

Supervisors should encourage the early reporting of symptoms to the Safety Manager. This will enable the Safety Manager or designee to react to a problem before the exposure results in an injury.

When an employee starts experiencing symptoms of a Cumulative Trauma Disorder illness, the supervisor will notify the Safety Manager. An evaluation will be conducted by the Safety Manager or designee using the Workstation Evaluation Form.

1. Cumulative Trauma Disorder Intervention

Cumulative Trauma Disorders are most successfully treated if they are recognized and treated early in the development. The following is a systematic approach for evaluating and following workers who are experiencing a problem.

New Hire Safety Orientation:

* An Ergonomic QuickCheck form may be completed for all new employees, who work at a static workstation. Documentation will be maintained by the Safety Manager, Safety Committee or designee.

Workstation Re-assignment / Work From Home:

* An Ergonomic QuickCheck form may be completed for employees positioned at a new workstation or are re-assigned to work from home. Documentation will be maintained by the Safety Manager, Safety Committee or designee.

Employee Discomfort Identified

* Once an employee has been identified with a problem, the Safety Manager, Safety Committee or designee lead will obtain a history from the worker to identify the location, duration and onset of pain/discomfort, swelling, tingling and/or numbness. The coordinator will also try to identify the aggravating factors.
* The assessment will be completed using an Workstation Evaluation Form. The evaluation will consist of inspection, discussion with the employee, observation of the employee and their tasks, recommendations, analysis and written report.
* Based on the severity of symptoms and physical signs, the designee will initiate a conservative treatment and/or refer the employee to a physician for further evaluation.
  + Employees experiencing pain with a positive physical sign, should be referred for physician evaluation.
* If mild symptoms and no physical signs are present, a worksite evaluation will be scheduled and conservative treatment will be recommended.

The Safety Manager may make the following recommendations based on symptoms experienced.

* Frequent breaks
* Varying of tasks
* Special stretches
* Implementation of worksite analysis recommendations

Based on the employee’s response to the conservative treatment plan, the following activities will occur:

* If the condition is resolved in two weeks, the Coordinator will reinforce good work practices and encourage the employee to return for a follow-up if problems reoccur.
* If the condition has improved, but is not resolved, the conservative treatment program will be continued for approximately 2 weeks with reevaluation following. The employee is responsible for scheduling the follow-up meeting.
* If the condition is unchanged or worse, refer the worker to the [Company]’s medical provider and prepare reassignment to a light duty job or restructure current position to eliminate ergonomic stressors.
* When a worker is referred to a physician, a written description of the ergonomic characteristics of the job will be supplied. This may be as simple as supplying the Ergonomic Workstation Assessment Form or Ergonomic QuickCheck form. Once an employee is referred to a physician, the recommendations of the physician will be followed.

1. Training

The key to a successful ergonomic program is employee education. All levels of personnel must have an understanding of what a Cumulative Trauma Disorder is and how to prevent the illness from occurring. They must also have a clear understanding of who they need to contact in case a problem should develop. Most Cumulative Trauma Disorders are preventable or can be resolved if the cause is identified early.

*General Training*

Employees who are potentially exposed to ergonomic hazards will be given formal instruction on the potential hazards associated with their jobs and equipment. Information provided will cover the varieties of Cumulative Trauma Disorders, what risk factors contribute to them, how to recognize and report symptoms, and how to prevent these disorders.

*Job Specific Training*

New employees and re-assigned employees will receive an initial orientation and hands on training in ergonomics prior to assuming new job responsibilities. A break in period for new employees or employees transferring to new job assignments will be established. The training will include what are Cumulative Trauma Disorders, the associated contributing factors, prevention techniques, proper tool usage and proper workstation set-up.

Employees will also be notified of whom to contact should signs of Cumulative Trauma Disorder occur.

*Training for Managers and Supervisors*

Managers, Supervisors and Safety Committee members or designee will be given a training class comparable to that of the employees, but with additional training which will help reinforce the ergonomics program.

Managers, Supervisors and Safety Committee members or designee will be able to identify and recognize early signs and symptoms of cumulative trauma disorders, and hazardous work practices.

Managers, Supervisors and Safety Committee members will also be provided information which will allow them to correct improper work practices and set-up.

1. Recordkeeping

Internal records of workstation evaluations will be maintained, and documents will be used by the Safety Committee for Cumulative Trauma Disorder trend analysis.