Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders Using Ergonomic Solutions

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Musculoskeletal Disorders

What are musculoskeletal disorders?
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs. MSDs are not usually the result of any instantaneous or acute event (such as a slip, trip, or fall) but reflect a more gradual or chronic development.

Why should a company care about MSDs?
Left unaddressed, MSDs threaten both the health and safety of your workers and the operational performance of your company. Preventing MSDs can help workplaces reduce costs, boost productivity, improve the quality of products and services, and stimulate innovation.

What does the law say?
Federally Regulated Firms – MSD Prevention Requirement
The Canada Labour Code (CLC) Part II governs the health and safety of workers who fall under federal jurisdiction. This applies to the trucking, railway, and airline sectors. Part XIX of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (COHS) deals with hazard prevention programs for ergonomic hazards.

An ergonomic prevention program must include
• a hazard identification and assessment methodology
• prevention measures
• employee education
• a program evaluation.

Provincial Firms—MSD-related Legislation under OHSA
Unlike the federally regulated firms, Ontario’s Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) does not have specific language dealing with musculoskeletal hazards. However, the Ministry of Labour has frequently enforced MSD prevention using the General Duty clauses (e.g., OSHA, S.25(2)(h)) and the construction regulations. For example, “Material or equipment at a project shall be stored and moved in a manner that does not endanger a worker” (O.Reg. 213/91, s.37. (1)).
Ergonomic Solutions

How can IHSA help?
IHSA has the products and services to help your hazard prevention program comply with current legislative requirements. Take a look at some of the services that IHSA can offer.

Ergonomic Assessments
IHSA can conduct ergonomic assessments for organizations that want to improve work quality, productivity, and profitability by changing certain processes and work practices to prevent MSDs. In addition to a work task and workstation design assessment, there are two specialized ergonomic services that are unique to IHSA:

Whole Body and Hand-Arm Vibration Assessment
Working with hand tools (e.g., impact or chipping tools) and heavy equipment (e.g., tractor trailers or lift trucks) can put workers at risk for hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) and lower-back pain. IHSA has the equipment, knowledge, and experience to measure the vibration levels of the tools and equipment used by your workers to ensure that your company meets a broad range of standards, such as ISO 2631 and ISO 5349. Our staff has extensive knowledge in this area and can recommend a variety of ways to control the vibration hazards in your workplace.

Office Workstation Assessment and Training
This service can help your workers optimize the ergonomic functionality of their office workstation to prevent the discomfort and injuries associated with prolonged computer use. IHSA offers a training program on office ergonomics: Ergonomics for Computer Users. After the training session, participants and IHSA’s ergonomist will assess each workstation to verify that they have been set up properly.

Ergonomic and Musculoskeletal Disorder Training
Ergonomic and MSD training is an integral part of any successful health and safety program. IHSA offers several training options on a variety of ergonomic-related topics to help workers and front-line managers better understand MSD prevention principles.

Ergonomics: Manual Material Handling Workshop
This workshop is designed to help reduce a worker’s risk of developing lower-back pain associated with manual material handling tasks (i.e., lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying). Taking this workshop will help your company comply with Parts 14.47 to 14.49 of the CLC.

Ergonomics: Implementing into the Workplace
This course will help your organization implement a successful MSD prevention plan. Participants will learn how to use the key elements outlined in the MSD Prevention Guideline to build a successful MSD prevention program, including how to effectively recognize hazards, conduct risk assessments, and develop and implement controls.

Ergonomic Change Team
This course will help organizations develop an Ergonomic Change Team for their company. The mandate of an Ergonomic Change Team is to identify and work to resolve risk factors that may contribute to MSDs.

Ergonomics for Computer Users
This course is geared toward anyone who uses a computer, even for brief portions of their day. The presentation is delivered in an electronic format and workers are provided handouts so they can apply what they have learned to their own workstations.

Ergonomics for Transportation – How to Prevent Strains, Sprains, and Overexertion
In Ontario, many companies in the transportation sector experience LTIs resulting from overexertion, strains, and sprains. These injuries hinder safety and decrease productivity, which leads to increased costs. If you want to make a bottom-line, fundamental difference in your health and safety program, attend this course.
Helpful MSD Products

IHSA publishes a wide variety of material on MSD prevention and ergonomics. See how IHSA can help by visiting ihsa.ca/products today. Many of our products are available to download for free in PDF format.

Before You Start Work exercise card (V012)
M: $54.95 NM: $109.95 pocket-sized laminated card 50/pkg

Back Care Exercises (FD039)
M: $24.95 NM: $54.95
This DVD provides a short daily exercise program to warm up, stretch, and strengthen the muscles that support your lower back. It features easy-to-follow instructions for key muscle groups. 10 minutes.

Safety Meeting Packages
M: $64.95 NM: $129.95

Visit ihsa.ca/msd for a complete list of msd-related products and services.

Make safety work for you.
IHSA is your first step.

IHSA is the leading developer and provider of prevention solutions for work environments involving high-risk activities such as working at heights, working with energized high-voltage power systems, powerline technician apprenticeship, driving motor vehicles, transporting dangerous goods, working on suspended access equipment, and utility line clearing.

We engage with our member firms, workers, and other stakeholders to help them continuously improve their health and safety performance. We do this by providing effective and innovative sector-specific programs, products, and services.

Find out what we can do for you at ihsa.ca