







SAFETY TALKS

Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI)

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Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSIs) are the leading cause of workplace injuries in the Sales and Service sector. Some of the tasks we perform at work such as lifting, reaching, and repeating the same movements can strain our musculoskeletal system, resulting in an MSI. This can be very debilitating and unfortunately, once a certain amount of damage has been done, it cannot be fully repaired, leading to long-term effects for the person involved. They can limit the person's ability to move, cause constant aches and pain, swelling, stiffness in the entire body and extreme fatigue because of disturbed sleep. The symptoms are very difficult to manage in everyday life and can limit or sometimes even stop a person from being able to work and continue normal activities.

MSIs can easily be prevented through education and understanding the signs and symptoms of injury, potential health effects and the risk factors associated with work. Some risk factors include:

Common Causes	
 Material Handling	Injuries due to heavy lifting, pushing, pulling, gripping, and twisting.
 Workstation	Furniture, layout design, keyboarding, and constant contact
 Repetitive Motion Injuries	Repetitive tasks combined with excessive force or highly repetitive motion from tools, vibration, etc.
 Inadequate Job Design	Pace of work, improper or awkward posture or movements, production pressure, lack of sufficient time to recover from overwork

What is the Danger?

It is important for employers and workers to recognize and address the early signs and symptoms of MSIs. Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Regulation requires employers to ensure that every worker who may be exposed to a risk of MSI is informed of the risks, the signs and common symptoms of any MSI associated with the worker's work.

Signs of an MSI can be observed while, symptoms can be felt but cannot be observed. These include:

Signs

- Swelling
- Redness
- Difficulty moving a particular body part

Symptoms

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Pain

Early signs and symptoms of MSIs can progress into conditions that can have long-term effects, these include:

Conditions

- Muscle strains to the neck, back, shoulder or legs
- Tendinitis
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome



If you are experiencing signs or symptoms of an MSI, please inform your supervisor and seek further medical attention. They may be treated more effectively if discovered and reported early.

Safety Tips

- ✓ Train workers and supervisors on signs and symptoms of MSI.
- ✓ Implement job rotation schedules to control MSI hazards due to repetitive work.
- ✓ Take mini-breaks and stretch breaks. If a worker sits during work, consider getting up and walking around.
- ✓ Plan ahead to minimize material handling. Use carts, dollies, hoists or other mechanical handling devices.
- ✓ Ensure wheeled carts are regularly maintained. Deficient carts require the use of extra force.
- ✓ Assess the weight of items being lifted. Use team lifting for safe material handling on heavier items.
- ✓ Use tables, benches, or stands to bring work to waist height.
- ✓ Store and position materials at waist height to avoid awkward posture.
- ✓ Substitute old bulky, awkward tools with newer ones that are better designed.
- ✓ Select hand tools that are designed for a neutral wrist posture and that reduce the amount of force required. It is important to always use the right tool for the right job.
- ✓ Maintain your power tools regularly so that they run with low vibration.
- ✓ Practice good housekeeping to reduce the risk of awkward postures and potential slips, trips and falls.
- ✓ Take your time when entering or exiting equipment. You want to maintain a 3-point contact.
- ✓ Use high quality knee pads for workers required to perform work on their knees. Tools that vibrate, consider the use of anti-vibratory gloves.

Demonstrate

Demonstrate a pre-use inspection of wheel carts or dollies with workers.

Review safe lifting / material handling Safe Work Procedure with workers.

Contact your S2SA Advisor for an Ergonomic Assessment service to help your company with MSI prevention.

Discussion

What tasks do we perform that are prone to MSIs?

Why do you think we have problems in these areas?

What are some ideas on how we can reduce our risk of MSI while performing these tasks?

