



# MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER?

A musculoskeletal disorder is an injury to a part of the musculoskeletal system, which is made up of muscles, tendons, nerves, joints, spinal discs. These injuries are due to the effects of repetitive, forceful and awkward movements.

## WHY PREVENT MSD?

### Costs to the system

MSD accounts for 40% of all work-related injuries,

### Costs to workers

- pain and suffering
- disruption to home and work life
- impact on families, friends and the community

### Costs to workplaces

- lost productivity and revenue
- surcharges and lost rebates
- Ministry of Labour orders

Source: [www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20FileMSDjhsc/MSDJHSCReps.pdf](http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20FileMSDjhsc/MSDJHSCReps.pdf)

## WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Ministry orders related to ergonomics are issued under Section 25(2)(h) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, known as the general duty clause, which requires employers to take all precautions reasonable in the circumstances to protect their workers. In addition, orders are issued under various other regulations; for example, those related to safe handling of materials, and provision of adequate lighting.

Source: Recommendations on Strategies to Reduce Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in Ontario, Supplementary Report to MOL, January 2006

## STEP ONE: RAISE AWARENESS (RECOGNITION)

### WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

- What is the injury history in our workplace: does it include MSD injuries?
- Does the injury history include similar types of injuries, or multiple injuries in a particular work area/job?
- Are employees experiencing pain or discomfort? Ask employees to complete a Discomfort Survey.

### WHAT WE SHOULD LOOK FOR

- Spend time on the floor observing employees executing their job tasks. If possible, managers and supervisors execute the job tasks.
- When observing employees at work, watch for:
  - awkward movements/positions
  - excessive lifting
  - repetitive tasks
  - homemade modifications (e.g. standing on a box)
  - injury/pain behaviour (e.g. rubbing joints)

## MSD RISK FACTORS

Force ▪ Repetition ▪ Awkward Posture ▪ Poor Workplace Conditions  
▪ Pace of Work ▪ Poor Work Habits

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## HAZARD SPOTLIGHT

### STEP TWO: TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT MSDs IN OUR WORKPLACE (CONTROLS)

- Train employees to recognize MSD hazards
- Train employees on proper lifting techniques
- Address ergonomic principles in safe work practices and in safe work instructions
- Consider the impact of overtime on the risk of injury
- Use proper equipment to help reduce the force required to complete tasks (i.e. eliminate lifting and pushing)
- Set up work stations and design work flow to minimize awkward positions
- Put task and job rotations in place to minimize the risk of sprains and strains
- Include MSD hazards in workplace inspections
- Encourage reporting of MSD hazards
- Ask employees for their opinion on how to reduce MSD hazards in their work area
- Praise and encourage employees who are working safely
- Treat MSDs the same as any other workplace injury or incident: investigate and follow-up
- Lead by example

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click on titles to access resources.

1. MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario
2. Resources Manual for MSD Prevention
3. MSD Prevention Toolbox A
4. MSD Prevention Toolbox B
5. MSD Prevention Toolbox C
6. MSD Risk Assessment
7. Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)
8. MSD Hazards Checklist
9. Discomfort Survey
10. Manual Material Handling
11. Office Workstation Design
12. Work, Warm-Up, Stretch and Flexibility Program
13. Ergonomics
14. Physical Demands Analysis form
15. Ergonomics Glossary



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