Office Ergonomics

Purpose

This policy establishes how you will enhance employee comfort and well-being by identifying and correcting ergonomic risk factors on the job.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are exposed to ergonomic risk factors.

Reference

This procedure is developed in accordance with OSHA recommendations regarding ergonomics and the OSHA General Duty Clause.

Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply to various levels within the company.

Senior management will do the following:

- Require the full application and integration of this policy into daily operations, as applicable, in all areas of responsibility and with all direct reports

- Assess managers and supervisors on their ability to apply this policy in their areas of responsibility

The Safety Administrator will administer all aspects of this policy to include the following:

- Maintaining and updating the written program as required

- Coordinating training for affected employees

- Providing necessary technical assistance to managers and supervisors

- Periodically assessing the effectiveness of this program and its implementation in all affected areas of the company

Managers and supervisors will do the following:

- Know how this policy applies to those areas under their direct control

- Integrate and enforce the provisions of this policy in their areas of responsibility

- Periodically audit the effectiveness of this policy in their areas of responsibility

- Coordinate training for affected employees

- Provide appropriate coaching and corrective action when necessary to ensure this policy is fully integrated

All affected employees will the following:

- Integrate the provisions of this policy into their daily activities as applicable

- Follow all training, instructions and directives relative to this policy

- Seek clarification whenever there are questions concerning the application of this policy into daily operations

Policy Evaluations and Updates

It is our goal to maintain a safety program that is understandable, effective and promotes a safe work environment. Any employee can make recommendations for improvement to this program or any other aspect of our safety system. These suggestions should be directed to any member of management, any safety committee member, or to the safety administrator.

As a matter of policy, this program will be reviewed on an annual basis by the safety administrator to determine if all aspects still meet the needs of this organization. If there are significant events that take place during the year that indicate the program is less than effective, an immediate evaluation will be conducted and appropriate steps taken to increase the reliability of this plan.

Date of Review	Name of Reviewer	Changes Required Yes or No	Current Revision Number
Published date		Original issue	#1

Definitions

The following definitions help to clarify words or phrases found in this policy:

- Ergonomics: The science of fitting the job to the worker.

- Ergonomics Assessment: The process of documenting the job/task MSD risk factors including force, repetition, posture and others created by the workstation design.

- Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD): Disorders of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, nerves and blood vessels; usually a result of repetitive or forceful motions that place strain on the body.

Injury/Medical Management

Employees are responsible for recognizing and reporting early symptoms of musculoskeletal injuries and illnesses. The employee should direct reports to an immediate supervisor or to Human Resources.

After any report of an employee job-related musculoskeletal disorder, injury or illness, the Ergonomics Team will be responsible to determine if additional practices, procedures or redesign of the workstation could be implemented to prevent similar injuries.

Identifying Problem Jobs

There are several methods used to the identify jobs that are most likely to result in ergonomic disorders:

- Reactive: annually reviews its injury and illness records to identify any patterns of ergonomic-related injuries and illnesses.

- Proactive: reviews jobs with significant ergonomic risk factors. They may include, but are not limited to the following:

  - Repetition: Performance of the same motion or motion patterns every few seconds for more than two hours at a time.

  - Awkward Postures: Fixed or awkward postures including overhead reaching, maintaining a twisted or bent back, maintaining bent wrists, stooping and squatting.

  - Vibration: Use of vibrating tools.

  - Heavy Material Handling: Lifting, lowering or carrying anything weighing more than 25 pounds more than once an hour.

  - Force: Pushing, pulling or tight gripping of objects for more than two hours at a time.

Additionally, employees with individual concerns about their workstation may request an in-person evaluation by contacting the Ergonomics Team.

Ergonomic Assessments

The Ergonomics Team will conduct an ergonomic assessment of a workstation when triggered by a reactive or proactive request. The Ergonomics Team will use the checklist identified in Appendix B.

Solutions

When problems are identified for correction, supervisors and employees in the affected areas are notified. The Ergonomics Team, in conjunction with the affected employee(s), will develop possible solutions, choose the most appropriate solution, implement the changes, and follow up to determine the effectiveness. Appendix C provides recommendations of possible solutions for common office ergonomic risk factors.

For each problem job that has been altered, a file of the improvements and changes completed will be maintained. The file contains documentation of ergonomic-related illnesses or injuries, actual changes made, and any similar incidents which occurred after the changes were implemented.

In addition, employees will take steps to prevent musculoskeletal disorders by taking brief breaks and stretching periodically throughout the day. Stretching is an effective way to reduce the effect of risk factors on the body.

Employee Training

Training will be conducted on sound ergonomic principles and practices to include the following:

- How to recognize workplace risk factors associated with work-related musculoskeletal disorders and the ways to reduce exposure to those risk factors.

- The signs and symptoms of work-related musculoskeletal disorders, the importance of early reporting and proper medical management procedures.

- Reporting procedures and the person to whom the employee is to report workplace risk factors and work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

- Opportunity to practice and demonstrate proper use of implemented control measures and safe work methods that apply to the job.

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Office Ergonomics Evaluation Form

This form is intended to help perform an Office Ergonomic assessment of an individual computer workstation.

Employee name	Date of assessment	Assessor name

Employee background information

Currently available ergonomic equipment

Note: Any "No" answers require a review for improvement options to the workstation or employee work practices.

WORKING POSTURES—The workstation is designed or arranged for doing computer tasks so it allows your:	Y	N	N/A	Comments
1. Head and neck to be upright or in line with the torso (not bent down/back).	☐	☐	☐	
2. Head, neck and trunk to face forward (without twisting).	☐	☐	☐	
3. Trunk to be perpendicular to the floor (may lean back into backrest but not forward).	☐	☐	☐	
4. Shoulders and upper arms to be in line with the torso, perpendicular to the floor and relaxed (not elevated or stretched forward).	☐	☐	☐	
5. Upper arms and elbows to be close to the body (not extended outward).	☐	☐	☐	
6. Forearms, wrists, and hands to be straight and in line (forearm at about 90 degrees to the upper arm).	☐	☐	☐	
7. Wrists and hands to be straight (not bent up/down or sideways toward the little finger).	☐	☐	☐	
8. Thighs to be parallel to the floor and lower legs to be perpendicular to floor (thighs may be slightly elevated above knees).	☐	☐	☐	

	Y	N	N/A	Comments
9. Feet to rest flat on the floor or be supported by a stable footrest.	☐	☐	☐	
SEATING—Consider these points when evaluating the chair:	**Y**	**N**	**N/A**	**Comments**
10. Backrest provides support for your lower back (lumbar area).	☐	☐	☐	
11. Seat width and depth accommodate the specific user (seat pan not too big/small).	☐	☐	☐	
12. Seat front does not press against the back of your knees and lower legs (seat pan not too long).	☐	☐	☐	
13. Seat has cushioning and is rounded with a "waterfall" front (no sharp edge).	☐	☐	☐	
14. Armrests, if used, support both forearms while worker performs computer tasks and they do not interfere with movement.	☐	☐	☐	
KEYBOARD/INPUT DEVICE—Consider these points when evaluating the keyboard or pointing device. The keyboard/input device is designed or arranged for doing computer tasks so the:	**Y**	**N**	**N/A**	**Comments**
15. Keyboard/input device platform(s) is stable and large enough to hold a keyboard and an input device.	☐	☐	☐	
16. Input device (mouse or trackball) is located right next to the keyboard so it can be operated without reaching.	☐	☐	☐	
17. Input device is easy to activate and the shape/size fits your hand (not too big/small).	☐	☐	☐	
18. Wrists and hands do not rest on sharp or hard edges.	☐	☐	☐	
MONITOR—Consider these points when evaluating the monitor. The monitor is designed or arranged for computer tasks so the:	**Y**	**N**	**N/A**	**Comments**
19. Top of the screen is at or below eye level so user can read it without bending the head or neck down/back.	☐	☐	☐	
20. User with bifocals/trifocals can read the screen without bending the head or neck backward.	☐	☐	☐	
21. Monitor distance allows user to read the screen without leaning the head, neck or trunk forward/backward.	☐	☐	☐	
22. Monitor position is directly in front of user, not necessitating twisting of the head or neck.	☐	☐	☐	
23. Glare (for example, from windows, lights) is not reflected on your screen which can cause you to assume an awkward posture to clearly see information on your screen.	☐	☐	☐	

WORK AREA—Consider these points when evaluating the desk and workstation. The work area is designed or arranged for doing computer tasks so the:	Y	N	N/A	Comments
24. Thighs have sufficient clearance space between the top of the thigh and the computer table/keyboard platform (thighs are not trapped).	☐	☐	☐	
25. Legs and feet have sufficient clearance space under the work surface so you are able to get close to the keyboard/input device.	☐	☐	☐	
ACCESSORIES—Check to see if the:	Y	N	N/A	Comments
26. Document holder, if provided, is stable and large enough to hold documents.	☐	☐	☐	
27. Document holder, if provided, is placed at about the same height and distance as the monitor screen so there is little head movement, or need to re-focus, when the user looks from the document to the screen.	☐	☐	☐	
28. Wrist/palm rest, if provided, is padded and free of sharp or square edges that push on the wrists.	☐	☐	☐	
29. Wrist/palm rest, if provided, allows forearms, wrists, and hands to remain straight and in line when using the keyboard/input device.	☐	☐	☐	
30. Telephone can be used with your head upright (not bent) and your shoulders relaxed (not elevated) when performing computer tasks while making a call.	☐	☐	☐	
GENERAL	Y	N	N/A	Comments
31. Workstation and equipment are adjustable so you are in a safe working posture and can make occasional changes in posture while performing computer tasks.	☐	☐	☐	
32. Computer tasks are organized in a way that allows the worker to vary tasks with other work activities, or to take micro-breaks or recovery pauses while at the computer workstation.	☐	☐	☐	

Improvement suggestions	Responsible	Date corrected

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Peabody INSURANCE