

# ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

## **Program Element R2-10-207(11)(g)**

Each Agency loss prevention committee, or individuals designated by the agency head, shall develop, implement, and monitor an Ergonomics Program specific to their agency.

An Ergonomics Program assists in controlling musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) that affect the muscles, nerves, and tendons. Work related MSDs (including those of the neck, upper extremities and lower back) are one of the leading causes of lost workday injury and illness.

Workers in many different industries and occupations can be exposed to risk factors at work, such as lifting heavy items, bending, reaching overhead, pushing and pulling heavy loads, working in awkward body postures and performing the same or similar tasks repetitively. Exposure to these known risk factors for MSDs increases a worker's risk of injury.

<b>Definition:</b>	An Ergonomics Program is a process that consists of management support, identifying risk factors through employee involvement, implementing controls, providing training, and periodically evaluating the process.
<b>Why do I need this program?</b>	The number and severity of MSDs resulting from physical overexertion, as well as their associated costs, can be substantially reduced by applying ergonomic principals. In 2013, the BLS musculoskeletal disorders accounted for 33% of all incidents requiring days away from work.
<b>How do I know if this program applies to my agency and my specific job hazards?</b>	Identify existing problems. This can be obtained from reviewing the OSHA 300 injury and illness logs, 301 reports, workers' compensation records, and worker reports of problems. Then review the facility or work site for specific risk factors by evaluating workstation designs, work practices, and the overall production process.

<p><b>What are the minimum required elements and/or best practices for an ergonomics' safety/ health program?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Management Support - Management should define clear goals and objectives for the ergonomic process and communicate clearly with the workforce.</li> <li>• Involve Workers - Workers should be directly involved in worksite assessments, solution development, and implementation.</li> <li>• <u>Provide Training</u> - Training ensures that workers are aware of ergonomics and its benefits.</li> <li>• <u>Identify Problems</u> - Identify and assess ergonomic risk factors in the workplace before they result in MSDs.</li> <li>• Early Reporting - Early reporting of symptoms can accelerate the job assessment and improvement process, and minimize injury.</li> <li>• Implement <u>Solutions</u> – Implement the hierarchy of controls to reduce, control, or eliminate workplace MSDs.</li> <li>• Evaluate Progress - Established evaluation and corrective action procedures need to be in place to periodically assess the effectiveness of the ergonomic process and to ensure its continuous improvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any mandatory training requirements or best practices that must be developed by the agency?</b></p>	<p>Training best practices should include both classroom training and hands on practice with new tools, equipment, or work practices to make sure they have the skills necessary to work safely.</p> <p>Use adult learning principles including hands on practice, several types of visual aids, problem solving sessions, and provide ample time for questions.</p> <p>Specific job training should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of ergonomics and their applications</li> <li>• Agency job specific safe work practices</li> <li>• Industry specific guidelines from OSHA eTools, NIOSH publications, and industry standards. For example, use safe patient handling guidelines from the VA, or safe lifting wire spools from the Electrical Contractors OSHA eTool</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper use of equipment, tools, and machine controls</li> <li>• Good work practices, such as proper material handling methods, tool selection and use, and workstation adjustments</li> <li>• Awareness of work tasks that may lead to pain or injury</li> <li>• Recognition of risk factors and early symptoms of MSDs</li> <li>• Reporting and addressing early indications of MSDs before serious injury develops</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there specific requirements for documenting the program, training, etc...?</b></p>	<p>Training records should be maintained and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date</li> <li>• Attendee</li> <li>• Instructor</li> <li>• Hands-on and theoretical topics</li> <li>• Time spent in training</li> <li>• Updates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any resources available that can assist me in putting together ergonomics' safety plan?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management has developed an <a href="#">Ergonomics Program template</a> which may be tailored to your agencies needs.</li> <li>• Bureau of Labor Statistics. Table 5. Number, incidence rate, and median days away from work for nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work by injury or illness characteristics and ownership, 2013: <a href="http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.t05.htm">http://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.t05.htm</a></li> <li>• OSHA Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics: <a href="https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/index.html">https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/index.html</a></li> <li>• OSHA Ergonomics eTools: <a href="https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html">https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html</a></li> <li>• OSHA Compliance Manual: OSHA Technical Manual (OTM) Section VII: Chapter 1: <a href="https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_vii/otm_vii_1.html">https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_vii/otm_vii_1.html</a></li> </ul>

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- 2014 Liberty Mutual, Workplace Safety Index:  
<http://www.jobs.libertymutualgroup.com/article/2014%20Workplace%20Safety%20Index>
  - NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/#guide>
  - University of South Florida, Ergonomics, Thomas E. Bernard:  
<http://personal.health.usf.edu/tbernard/ergotools/index.html>