

MSD Prevention

employers

What are MSD?

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) are injuries affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves. They are sometimes called Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI), Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD) and Repetitive Motion Injuries (RMI).

MSD develop due to the effects of repetitive, forceful or awkward movements on joints, ligaments and other soft tissues. Some MSD injuries include Low Back Strain, Neck Strain, Tendonitis, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), Rotator Cuff Syndrome, and Tennis Elbow (Epicondylitis).

What can you do?

Employers have legal responsibilities for health and safety and must 'take every precaution reasonable' to protect workers. The best way to do that is to integrate MSD prevention into the health and safety program.

- Incorporate MSD prevention as an objective in your health and safety policy and program.
- Review your health and safety program to see how you can include or strengthen the MSD prevention activities.
- Make sure workers and supervisors are trained on how to recognize, assess and eliminate/control MSD hazards.
- Ensure supervisors know what to do if they recognize a hazard or if a worker raises a concern.
- Check that all equipment and materials used in the workplace are safe from MSD hazards.
- Make sure new equipment has ergonomic features before purchasing it.

Taking a systematic approach to managing health and safety in your workplace will help minimize the risks. **Five Steps to Managing Health and Safety** provides a step-by-step approach. See over for ways you can use this approach to prevent MSD.

WHY PREVENT MSD?

Costs to the system:

MSD account 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



ONLINE RESOURCES

PREVENTION DYNAMICS

To link to the health and safety association for your industry and to access their MSD resources, please visit www.preventiondynamics.com

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

www.labour.gov.on.ca

Check the Health and Safety Section for the Pains and Strains resources and information for preventing MSD.

PREVENTION PRACTICES DATABASE

www.preventionpractices.com

Find and share resources and practices for preventing MSD.

OSH FOR EVERYONE

www.oshforeveryone.org

Information to help you recognize, assess and control MSD hazards.

ONTARIO WORKPLACE GATEWAY

www.serviceontario.ca/workplacegateway

Check the Repetitive Strain section for information and links to help workplaces prevent MSD.

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers

OSH Answers service provides health and safety information on a variety of topics including MSD hazards and how to control them.

HEALTH CANADA

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Look in the Environmental and Workplace Health section under Occupational Health and Safety.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

www.wsib.on.ca

Find information about the WSIB services, programs and initiatives. Contact the WSIB for a copy of the Prevent MSD in Your Workplace CD-ROM.

WSIB Prevention Hotline:

416 344-1016 or 1-800-663-6639

For service in languages other than English call:

416-344-4999 or 1-800-465-5606

For Telephone Service for the Deaf (TTY): 1-800-387-0050

Five Steps To Managing Health And Safety

STEP 1: Set Standards, or expectations, for how work will be done.

- Include MSD prevention in your health and safety policy.
- Establish how you will recognize MSD hazards (inspections, surveys, reports)
- Establish how you will assess MSD hazards (use inspection tools, audit tools, and physical demands analysis).
- Establish how you will eliminate or control MSD hazards, e.g., purchasing standards for ergonomically-designed equipment such as adjustable workstations).
- Determine what MSD hazard awareness and prevention training to provide, to whom, and how often.

STEP 2: Communicate your expectations

- Determine who needs to know what about MSD hazards and prevention.
- Determine how you will communicate this information, e.g., during orientation training, in monthly newsletters and on bulletin boards.

STEP 3: Train everyone in MSD hazard awareness and prevention

- Train everyone to recognize MSD hazards and early signs and symptoms.
- Ensure all office employees receive office ergonomics training, including how to adjust computer workstations.
- Train all employees who handle materials on safe manual material handling.
- Ensure someone knowledgeable in MSD prevention delivers the training.
- Keep records of who received what training, when and who provided it.
- Evaluate training using quizzes, on-site inspections and review of work practices by supervisor.
- Ensure supervisors receive training on recognizing, assessing and controlling MSD hazards.

STEP 4: Evaluate to determine if the expectations set in Step 1, Setting Standards, are being met.

- Review the standards you've established to see if they are still appropriate.
- Evaluate to make sure the standards set are being followed and complied with.
- Review reports of MSD occurring to see if they are increasing or decreasing.
- Find out if workers have MSD symptoms. Ask them and/or use a survey.
- Do staff perception surveys about MSD.

STEP 5: Acknowledge Success / Make Improvements

- Make necessary changes or improvements based on the results of the evaluation
 - Acknowledge success by recognizing individual efforts, for example, during performance reviews, in workplace newsletters, at team meetings.
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