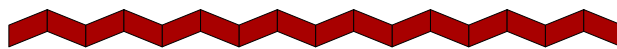




# ERGONOMICS PROGRAM STANDARD



## Safety & Security Fact Sheet

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued an Ergonomics Program Standard (1910.900) to prevent musculoskeletal disorders. Here are some questions and answers that will help you understand how this standard may affect you.

### ✓ **WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?**

Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker to minimize discomfort and potential injury. When the physical requirements of the job and the physical capacity of the worker are mismatched, musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) can result. Risk factors include repetitive motion, awkward positions, frequent lifting, vibration, and prolonged application of physical force.

### ✓ **WHAT ARE MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs)?**

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries and disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. They do not include injuries resulting from slips, trips, falls, or similar accidents. Examples of MSD include carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, sciatica, herniated disc, and low back pain. According to the standard, an MSD incident has occurred when it is:

- Diagnosed by a health care professional, resulting in a positive physical finding, or serious enough to require medical treatment, days away from work, or assignment to light duty.
- Directly related to the employee's job.
- Specifically connected to activities that form the core or a significant part of the worker's job.

### ✓ **WHAT DOES THE STANDARD REQUIRE?**

The standard requires that when an employee has experienced an MSD incident, it must be determined whether the job meets the action trigger. If so, the standard requires MSD management, job hazard analysis, hazard reduction and control measures, and training of affected employees.

### ✓ **ARE TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS COVERED BY THIS STANDARD?**

The standard covers any employee who has experienced an MSD incident.

### ✓ **WHY DOES AN MSD INCIDENT HAVE TO OCCUR BEFORE EMPLOYERS MUST ANALYZE AND FIX JOBS OR WORKSTATIONS?**

MSD hazards are multifactorial, which means they usually involve exposure to a combination of ergonomic risk factors. The multifactorial nature means that it may be less certain what combination of risk factors may be reasonably likely to cause or contribute to an MSD in a particular job. An MSD incident, on the other hand, is a concrete and fairly objective measure of whether problems are likely to exist in a job.

### ✓ **DOES THE PROPOSED RULE REQUIRE THAT I WILL RECEIVE NEW FURNITURE OR AN ERGONOMIC WORKSTATION?**

MSDs are often very easy to prevent. Ergonomic interventions reduce physical stress and may include:

- Adjusting the height of working surfaces to reduce long reaches, twisting motions, and awkward postures.
- Putting work supplies and equipment within comfortable reach.
- Reducing the size or weight of files or notebooks.
- Varying tasks for workers (e.g., job rotation).
- Encouraging short authorized rest breaks.
- Using telephone headsets.
- Providing ergonomic chairs, stools, or foot rests.
- Supplying anti-fatigue floor mats.
- Adjusting lighting and reducing glare.

If you need assistance, call the safety section at 571-423-2010.