



# **MENDOCINO COUNTY ERGONOMICS PLAN**

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS – JUNE 3, 2003

# ERGONOMICS PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PURPOSE	2
RESPONSIBILITIES	3
• Department Heads	3
• Managers and Supervisors	3
• Employees	4
ERGONOMIC WORKSITE EVALUATION	4
TRAINING	4
RECORDKEEPING	5

## ERGONOMICS PLAN

### Scope

This program establishes the County of Mendocino's procedures for ergonomic or musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace. It provides information and guidance on the process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating, and mitigating workplace hazards from repetitive motion tasks in connection with employment at Mendocino County.

This Program sets forth minimum standards for all County Departments, Agencies, and Groups. Individual entities may implement more stringent standards. Copies of Department prepared programs are to be provided to Risk Management.

### Purpose

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, General Industry Safety Orders, Section 5110 (\*as amended) requires California employers to establish effective programs for the purpose of eliminating or minimizing the risk of employee exposure to musculoskeletal disorders through work site evaluations, employee training, and utilization of appropriate engineering and work practice controls.

### Introduction

It is the goal of Mendocino County to make every task performed by its employees physically and environmentally safe. In many instances, this is done through the use of “**Ergonomics**”. Ergonomics focuses on the interaction between people and their work, the tools they use, the tasks they perform and the physical environment in which they perform their jobs.

### Definitions

Administrative Controls – Any procedure which significantly reduces daily exposure by control or manipulation of the work schedule or manner in which work is performed (i.e. using job rotation, allowing frequent rest breaks, alternating tasks, adjusting work methods).

Awkward Posture – Any part of the body working in a stressful or non-neutral posture (i.e. twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, stooping, extended reaching/stretching).

Engineering Controls – Physical changes to work stations, equipment, materials or any other relative aspect of the work environment, which reduces or prevents exposure to work related risk factors.

Mechanical or Contact Stresses – Produced when the soft tissues of the fingers, hands or wrists are squeezed between the bone and external objects, such as tools, parts, or adjacent equipment.

Repetitive Motions – Performing rapid or continuous repetition of the same contact motions or motion pattern, which stresses the body parts performing that motion.

Risk Factors – Procedures that expose any part of the body to awkward positions, repetitive motions, or other forces that increase the risk of a musculoskeletal disorder.

Sustained Posture – Prolonged muscle contraction without movement.

Vibration – Localized vibration exposure is produced by contact between the hands and a vibrating object such as a power tool. Whole body vibration occurs while standing or seated in vibrating environments or objects such as trucks, heavy machinery, or while using heavy equipment such as jackhammers.

“Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) Also Known As (RMIs or CTDs) – Clinically diagnosed repetitive injury of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, peripheral nerves, joints, cartilage, bones, and/or supporting vessels in either the upper/lower extremities or back, which are associated with ergonomic risk factors and which are not the result of acute or instantaneous events.

### **Responsibilities**

Department Heads and Supervisors have the following responsibilities with regard to ergonomics:

1. Ensure implementation of the Ergonomics Program within their Department;
2. Provide corrective action as may be deemed necessary or practical to modify or replace equipment, machinery, and tools which are found to create musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) if technologically feasible, in conjunction with Risk Management.

Supervisors of employees in jobs, processes, or operations where an MSD has occurred shall:

1. Ensure employees are provided with and use appropriate tools, equipment, parts, and material required to perform the job at the lowest level of exposure to risk factors that is feasible, in conjunction with Risk Management;
2. If an injury has occurred on the job, the supervisor needs to fill out an Incident Report Form and provide the employee a Workers’ Compensation Form within 24-hours of notification;
3. Contact the Department of Risk Management at 463-6553 and request an ergonomic evaluation of the worksite whether or not the employee decides to file a Workers’ Compensation claim for their injury;
4. Make frequent checks to ensure employees are properly using equipment and controls that have been implemented.

The Risk Management Department shall:

1. Prepare guidelines, programs, training, and implementation monitoring, in conformance with all Title 8, California Code of Regulations (\*as amended);
2. Provide all ergonomic evaluations of workstations and work processes;
3. Develop and present manager/supervisor training upon request;
4. Provide consultation with regard to the process of anticipating, identifying, evaluating and mitigating ergonomic hazards;
5. Ensure that a procedure is in place for employees to report symptoms and perceived work related ergonomic risk factors;
6. Monitor the effectiveness of the County ergonomic program on an on-going basis.

Employees will:

1. Follow established procedures to ensure that equipment is properly maintained in good condition;
2. Attend ergonomics training as required by the Supervisor, and apply the knowledge and skills acquired to actual job tasks, processes or work activities;
3. Report damaged, malfunctioning tools, equipment or materials to supervisors;
4. Report signs and symptoms of MSDs and perceived work related ergonomic hazards to supervisors.
5. All employees must maintain a clutter free workspace. The unnecessary clutter may lead to undesirable body positioning and work habits.

### **Ergonomic Worksite Evaluations**

The purpose of conducting an ergonomic worksite evaluation is to identify risk factors that may lead to MSDs, determine any feasible engineering or administrative control measures to reduce or prevent employee exposure to MSDs, and identify appropriate types of personal protective equipment where effective engineering controls are not feasible.

A formal workstation evaluation is one conducted by a representative of the Risk Management Department who is trained in identifying ergonomic hazards. It is not necessary for an employee to have an injury to request a worksite evaluation. It is encouraged to report and evaluate any ergonomic hazard before it causes an injury.

Workstation evaluations are required when an employee reports a symptom which may be related to the development of a work related MSD, before and after implementation of new jobs, tasks, tools, equipment or processes, or when an employees is diagnosed with a repetitive motion injury.

### **Training**

Training is intended to help both management and employees recognize unsafe ergonomic practices that might lead to MSDs. The following training is available and provided by Risk Management:

- Employees will receive training upon hire through new employee safety orientation;
- Updated training during employment through handouts attached to payroll, quarterly newsletters, and an hour training provided by Risk Management through the Wellness Program.
- Employees, managers, and supervisors are provided with training and selected handouts (upon request) that include an explanation of:
  - a. The Ergonomics Program.
  - b. Exposures that have been associated with MSDs.
  - c. The symptoms and consequences of injuries caused by repetitive motion.
  - d. The importance of reporting symptoms and injuries to the employer.
  - e. The methods used by the employer to minimize MSDs.
  - f. Techniques employees can use for workplace self-assessment.
- Training is provided to potentially effected employees as follows:
  - a. Initial training is provided as part of the establishment of the ergonomics program (upon request by the employees supervisor).

- b. Upon completion of a worksite evaluation which identifies exposures which may have caused MSDs.
- c. To all potentially exposed employees given new job assignments for which training has not previously been received (upon request by the employees supervisor)

### **Recordkeeping**

Accurate records will be maintained by the Risk Management Department as follows:

- Reports from employees of symptoms of MSDs and any perceived work related ergonomic risks;
- Ergonomic worksite evaluations conducted in the workplace;
- Prevention or control measures implemented to prevent or minimize exposure to work related ergonomic risk factors; and
- Training records, including date(s), name of instructor(s), training materials/curriculum used, and list of attendees.