

OCCUPATIONAL ERGONOMICS

I. REFERENCES

- A. California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5110, General Industry Safety Orders
- B. *Ergonomics Guidelines for UCSD*, Blink.ucsd.edu/go/ergo

II. POLICY

Ergonomics is defined as fitting the workplace to the worker and examining the interaction between the worker and his or her environment. Applying ergonomic principles can help reduce the risk of injuries or illnesses for those who work with computers, in laboratories, in jobs that require repetitive activities, and heavy materials handling.

It is the University's policy to reduce or eliminate hazards that contribute to the development of cumulative trauma disorders (CTD)--a class of disorders that are caused, precipitated, or aggravated by repetitive motions. The primary components of UCSD's program are worksite evaluations, employee and supervisor training, and implementation of ergonomic control strategies. Ergonomics should not be seen as a one-time effort; it is a continuous, on-going approach and should be incorporated into daily activities to prevent or reduce CTD injuries.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Reporting

Employees experiencing any CTD symptoms and/or back pain resulting from work tasks should report the problem to their supervisor as soon as possible. Early intervention is essential to the quick recovery and long-term prevention of CTD's. CTD's usually develop gradually. Symptoms such as pain, numbness, and tingling in the upper extremities are often ignored until the condition becomes chronic or permanent injury occurs. Supervisors and/or employees experiencing CTD symptoms are advised review the resources on the ergonomics Blink site: Blink.ucsd.edu/go/ergo and contact Environment, Health and Safety (EH&S).

B. Employee Education

Employee awareness training has been shown to successfully reduce the risk of CTD problems. It is essential to introduce and incorporate ergonomics with daily activities.

Ergonomics training can be completed via online web-based tutorials on Blink site or by classroom instructor facilitated sessions. Customized training can be requested by high risk departments and offered by EH&S. The intent of ergonomics training is to increase awareness and provide practical application to help reduce ergonomically related injuries.

C. Ergonomics Workplace Evaluation

The evaluation consists of the employee workstation, tasks, and work practices. Workstation assessments include work tools (chair, keyboard, mouse, telephone, vibrational hand tool, ratchet); work postures particularly the arms, hands, and spine; and identification of ergonomic risk factors: repetition rates, forceful exertions, awkward postures, localized mechanical stresses, lighting, vibration and temperature extremes. Tier 2 On-Site Evaluation may be scheduled through EH&S.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Managers

Managers and supervisors play a leading role in the implementation of strategies to control cumulative trauma disorders in the workplace. Managers are encouraged to implement strategies to control cumulative trauma disorders. Measures to take include:

1. Learning about CTD causes and control options.
2. Providing resources (as available) to implement ergonomic solutions.
3. Performing or requesting periodic risk assessments to identify ergonomic hazards.
4. Purchasing furniture that has maximum adjustment flexibility and complies with standards established by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and UCSD's furniture guidelines.
5. Restructuring job tasks to reduce risk factors which contribute to CTD's.
6. Encouraging supervisors to implement steps to control CTD's in the workplace.
7. Providing training to supervisors and employees.
8. Implementing a team approach to ergonomic solutions.

B. Supervisors

Supervisors are encouraged to provide employees with appropriate ergonomics training, support, assistance, and evaluations (where appropriate). There are several ways this can be accomplished:

1. Promote a safe and healthy work environment.
2. Maintain an awareness of CTD risks.
3. Evaluate the work environment for proper ergonomic practices and conditions.
4. Provide proper workstations and assistive devices.
5. Implement procedures on Blink ergonomics site to respond to employee concerns about CTD problems.
6. Promptly report all employee injuries and/or employee complaints regarding CTD symptoms.
7. Contact EH&S for ergonomics guidance and assistance.
8. Provide adequate recovery time by allowing employees engaged in highly repetitive tasks an opportunity for frequent, short, alternative work activities and breaks.
9. Integrate ergonomics into total department safety management.

C. Employees

Employees are encouraged to promptly report ergonomic problems to their supervisors. Prompt implementation of workplace changes can significantly reduce the potential for severe CTD injuries or illnesses. It is recommended that employees:

1. Report early signs of muscular pain and discomfort resulting from occupational work tasks and workstations to supervisor and Workers' Compensation.
2. Participate and apply materials covered at the employee awareness training, on-line and/or in classroom.
3. Alternate repetitive tasks to minimize pain and discomfort.
4. Adjust and use individual workstation and equipment per manufacturer's instructions.
5. Follow safe work practices.
6. Make effective use of recovery periods.
7. Follow ergonomic recommendations.

D. EH&S-Occupational Health and Hygiene Division

A primary goal of the Environment, Health and Safety Office is to reduce health, safety, and environmental risks to the UCSD community. Ergonomic evaluators from EH&S are expected to:

1. Coordinate the ergonomics program to reduce cumulative trauma injuries at UCSD campus.
2. Provide guidance on modifying the workplace to minimize the potential for CTD injuries.
3. Provide ergonomics training for employees, supervisors, and managers.
4. Coordinate and conduct Tier 2 On-Site Ergonomics evaluation.
5. Provide assistance and advice on the selection of ergonomically sound furniture, products and equipment.
6. Coordinate with ergonomics equipment providers to offer feasible options for ergonomic remediation.

E. EH&S-Risk Management Division: Workers' Compensation

When an employee experiences a work-related injury or illness, Risk Management initiates workers' compensation procedures. The program objective is to bring about an expedient recovery and return to productive work. Risk Management notifies the EH&S Occupational Health & Hygiene Division of reported CTD injuries for follow-up.

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F. Capital Planning and Budgeting Department

The Capital Planning and Budgeting (CP/B) Department coordinates state and non-state minor and major capital improvement programs and prepares required documentation. CP/B is responsible for long-range facility planning, including workstation planning. Project Managers assigned to planning, designing and renovating workstations should implement ergonomics considerations and solicit input from the end users.

G. Procurement and Contracts

Marketplace works collaboratively with EH&S to offer updated adjustable products to address ergonomics considerations.