

Nevada System of Higher Education

Ergonomics Program

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy

It is the policy of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to ensure safe and healthy learning, research, work, entertainment and student living environments for faculty, staff, students and visitors. Implicit in this policy is a requirement to employ effective ergonomic practices.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

Ergonomics is the science or discipline that focuses on the interface between people and their work environment in an effort to fit that environment to the individual's physical needs and limitations. The application of sound ergonomic principles can reduce the incidents of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) or injuries for individuals who are required to perform strenuous or repetitive motions.

This program establishes the protocols for the prevention of MSDs at NSHE. It serves to inform NSHE personnel about MSDs and the risk factors that can cause or aggravate them. It strives to promote improvement in ergonomic protection. It identifies design principles that prevent exposure to risk factors and stresses education and action on the part of individuals.

MSDs are injuries and disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage and spinal disks.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Department Chairperson/Director

The ultimate responsibility and authority for the department Ergonomics Program rests with the Department Chairperson/Director. It is their responsibility to ensure that the program is carried out within their area of authority.

2.2 Managers

Managers play a key role in the Ergonomics Program. They are expected to:

- Encourage ergonomic assessments of workstations within their area of authority.
- Encourage their subordinate's participation in ergonomics training programs and workstation assessments.
- Support the procurement of ergonomically sound equipment and furnishings within their area of authority.
- Support corrections to ergonomic problems by ensuring that proper education and resources are available to supervisors and staff personnel.

2.3 Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for implementing the department's Ergonomics Program. They should request technical advice and assistance from either the Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office or the Business Center's (BC) Worker's Compensation Office. Supervisor responsibilities include:

- Assuring that the work environment is evaluated for proper ergonomic conditions and practices.
- Making ergonomic evaluations a part of ongoing workplace assessments.
- Ensuring that affected employees are provided with ergonomics training.
- Enforcing established work practice rules.
- Responding to staff concerns regarding ergonomic conditions.
- Reporting all employee injuries or complaints regarding MSDs.
- Ensuring that complete records of all training, site assessments and injury investigations are maintained.

2.4 Staff

Staff members are responsible for following the requirements of the department's Ergonomics Program. These responsibilities include:

- Participation in ergonomics training as provided.
- Correctly adjusting and using the equipment and tools that are provided.
- Performing simple exercises as recommended during training.
- Reporting ergonomic concerns to their supervisor.
- Prompt reporting of symptoms of a MSD to their supervisor.

2.5 Worker's Compensation Office

The BC Worker's Compensation Office performs an advisory and recordkeeping role in the Ergonomics Program. They perform the following support functions:

- Performs ergonomic assessment of workstations and reports recommendations to the appropriate management representative.
- Manages MSD claims.
- Communicates with medical service providers and insurers
- Initiates the early-return-to-work program.
- Performs an ongoing review of injury reports in order to identify trends and problem areas.
- Ergonomics training.

2.6 System Health and Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (SHEPAC)

SHEPAC performs a system advisory and oversight function for the NSHE Ergonomics Program. It performs the following functions:

- Coordinates the Ergonomics Program to reduce MSDs at NSHE locations.
- Reviews the Ergonomics Program and its attachments annually and makes any necessary modifications.

2.7 Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office or System Ergonomics Team Member

The Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office or the System Ergonomics Team Member performs a campus advisory and oversight function for the Ergonomics Program. They perform the following functions:

- Provides or coordinates training as requested.
- Can perform or coordinate workstation ergonomic assessments
- Provides technical assistance in modifications of the workplace, standard interpretation, exposure monitoring and technical issues related to the Program.
- Acts as the point contact for Human Resources, Workers' Compensation Office, Purchasing, Facilities Management and/or Computing Services personnel.

2.8 Purchasing

- Purchasing agents will possess a basic knowledge of and ability to identify purchase items with potential ergonomic impact and will insure that ergonomically related purchases meet minimum criteria.
- Assigns one or more persons to coordinate with the Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office or institution System Ergonomics Team representative regarding purchases with ergonomic impact (i.e., furniture, computer equipment, etc.)
- Contacts the Safety Officer or System Ergonomics Team representative when identified purchases are requested.

2.9 Facilities Management

- Responds to requests to make changes to workstations.
- Installs and adjusts furniture and workstations to support the NSHE ergonomics Program where required.

2.10 Computing Services

- Installs and adjusts computer workstations to support the NSHE Ergonomics Program.

3.0 ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENTS OF WORKSTATIONS

3.1 Assessment Triggers

The purpose of workstation ergonomic assessments is to identify, evaluate and control potential ergonomic risk factors. Assessments may be initiated by any of the following:

- The first report of injury containing an ergonomic risk factor.
- A report of potential ergonomic hazard.
- Staff requests.
- Periodic audits.

3.2 Assessment Procedure

Once a workplace ergonomic assessment has been triggered, the following procedure should be followed:

- The assessor will make an appointment to evaluate the workstation.
- The reporting/affected individual should be present during the assessment of the workstation. The objective of the assessment is to better fit the workstation to that individual's physical characteristics.
- The assessor will conduct a visual assessment and any necessary measurements will be taken.
- The resultant data will be evaluated and a report written.
- The final report, with recommendations, will be submitted to the employee and their supervisor.
- The supervisor and the department are responsible for implementation of the assessment recommendations.

3.3 Approved Assessors

Designated personnel in following offices are approved assessors and should be contacted in the order listed:

- Worker's Compensation Office
- Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office

4.0 HAZARD PREVENTION AND CONTROL

4.1 Control Prioritization

Following the completion of a workstation ergonomic assessment the types of controls listed below will be evaluated and considered for possible implementation in the order listed.

4.1.1 Engineering Controls

Engineering controls consist of measures such as redesigning the workstation to eliminate the hazard or the procurement of additional tools and equipment to assist in completion of the assigned task. Engineering controls are any control measures applied to the situation that serve to eliminate the hazard.

4.1.2 Work Practice/Technique Controls

Work practice or technique controls consist of modifying the work procedure to eliminate or minimize the hazard. These types of controls are less effective than engineering controls that eliminate the hazard.

4.1.3 Administrative Controls

Administrative controls are the least desired and least effective means of reducing the hazard. They consist of measures such as reducing the length of time a person may work at the task in question. Instead of solving the problem and eliminating or reducing the hazard, they reduce the period of exposure.

5.0 MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

5.1 Accident/Incident Reporting

In the event of an employee reports a MSD, their supervisor will ensure that employee completes a C-1 form within *2 working days. The BC Office will be responsible for completing the required C-3 form.

5.2 Medical Evaluations

*All employees who report a MSD will be advised to seek medical attention by a medical service provider approved under the elected Worker's Compensation program. Employees are responsible for closely following the medical provider's directions for recovery.

5.3 Alternate Duty

The department will make every effort to accommodate the injured employee's work limitations during their period of recovery. If there are any questions about work limitations or alternate duty options, contact the Worker's Compensation Office.

6.0 TRAINING

6.1 Personnel Requiring Training

Staff members who work in problem jobs (see Section 1.2 Purpose and Scope) and their supervisors should both be trained. Staff member training should be conducted at the initial assignment to the problem task and whenever a new potential risk is introduced into the area.

6.2 Training Components

The training may take one or any of several formats listed below depending upon the specific circumstances of the individual situation.

6.2.1 Formal Presentations

Formal classroom type presentations may be used to discuss topics such as body mechanics, reductions of stresses, exercises and ergonomics awareness.

6.2.2 Informal Workstation Observation/Evaluation

Informal observation of the workstation can be used to identify equipment and procedural deficiencies that contribute to the MSD hazard.

6.2.3 Training Videos

The use of training videos that have a direct application to the type of problem task in question permits a more flexible training schedule. Videos can be used by the staff member and/or their supervisor when they are needed, as opposed to having to try and schedule formal training around other work responsibilities and obligations.

6.2.4 Handouts and Literature

The use of handouts and literature can be used to supplement the other forms of training and should not be used as a substitute for them. Handouts and literature can serve as reference source and as a training reminder or refresher.

7.0 RECORD KEEPING

7.1 Medical Records

All medical records associated with this program are to be maintained by the BC Worker's Compensation Office.

7.2 Workstation Assessment Records

The Institution Environmental Health and Safety Office shall maintain all records of workstation assessments.

7.3 Training Records

Each institution will maintain all training records required by this program. Individual trainers will provide copies of all training documents and records for each training session they conduct.

8.0 ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Office Chairs

Office chairs shall have the following features:

- An adjustable seat height
- An adjustable seat pan
 - Angle or tilt
 - Seat depth
- An adjustable seat back
 - Tilt or angle
- Adjustable arm rests

8.2 Computer Keyboard Trays

Computer keyboard trays shall have the following features:

- Adjustable clearance for the operator's legs
- Adjustable height and depth
- Tray angle adjustments made from the back of the tray only

8.3 Other Equipment

Contact the Worker's Compensation Office or Institution Environmental Health & Safety representative for assistance in addressing ergonomic issues related to those tools, equipment and workstations not specified here.