



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINE

Subject: Ergonomics Program

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This Guideline is issued by the Department of Occupational Safety & Environmental Health to provide guidance and consistency in management of ergonomic evaluations and activities for University of Michigan faculty and staff.

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SUMMARY: This Ergonomics Guideline has been developed to provide information to University faculty and staff to prevent the development of ergonomic injuries. Increased awareness of ergonomic risk factors and how to apply methods to reduce the risk of injury often leads to increased comfort and productivity of employees, resulting in a healthier University community.

SCOPE: The Guideline is provided to assist Ann Arbor campus faculty and staff with information and resources to prevent and/or reduce ergonomics related injuries in their work environment.

University of Michigan Standard Practice Guide 605.1 states “Every faculty member and person in a supervisory position is responsible for maintaining conditions which will provide for the safety, well being and safe conduct of all people who report to him/her or who frequent his/her area. Faculty and supervisors should ensure their students and staff members are aware of the importance of safety; maintain safe working conditions; and set examples of safe conduct. Everyone is required to observe established safety principles and procedures.”

The OSEH department is available to assist supervisors on the Ann Arbor Campus with matters related to workplace ergonomic services. Ergonomic services for faculty and staff located at the University Health System, or on the Dearborn and Flint campuses should contact their respective Environment Health and Safety Office.

- University Health System: 764-4427 or [UMHS Safety Management Services](#)
- Dearborn Campus: 313-593-4914 or [UM-Dearborn EHS](#)
- Flint Campus: 810-766-6763 or [U-M Flint EHS](#)

REFERENCE

REGULATIONS: Currently there are no State or Federal regulations addressing Ergonomics, although many guidance documents are available to make the point that ergonomic programs are beneficial and cost effective. OSEH offers the following information to assist University units in the promotion of ergonomic injury prevention.

DEFINITIONS: *Ergonomics* is the study of the physical and functional relationship between people, the work they do and their work environment. It is about adapting the workplace to fit the worker. Principles of ergonomics can be used at work, home and during recreation activities.

Ergonomic Injuries occur due to repetitive movements over time (typically not an accidental or single event) affecting muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs. Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD), Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD), and Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI) are common terms used to describe ergonomic injuries.

Ergonomic Risk Factors include:

- Repetition
- Forceful exertions
- Awkward and sustained postures
- Contact stress
- Lifting and carrying
- Environmental factors (e.g., lighting, noise, temperature)
- Vibration
- Psychological stressors
- Lack of recovery time

RESPONSIBILITY: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

- Recognize the importance of employee comfort during work activities, while empowering management and staff to make changes to their work environment that would make work processes more productive.
- Encourage all employees to gain a better understanding of the ergonomic process at the University of Michigan to prevent ergonomic injuries.

Supervisors

- Support employee participation in the Ergonomic Program by encouraging identification of and solutions to existing risk factors that may contribute to ergonomic injuries. OSEH is available to assist in this process.
- Be familiar with the applicable government regulations, safety standards, and prudent safety practices to protect themselves and their fellow employees (Reference: SPG 605.1 and 605.2).
- If an employee sustains a work-related injury, the supervisor should complete the [Work Connections Illness and Injury Report Form](#) and follow the directions on the Work Connections website to obtain proper medical treatment and follow-up.

Employees

- Utilize the University ergonomic resources to reduce the potential for ergonomic injuries.
- Follow all safety and health recommendations provided by your supervisor and/or OSEH to reduce and prevent injuries
- Use all appropriate safety equipment provided by your department.
- Report unsafe work conditions and injuries to your supervisor.

OSEH

- Review work sites to determine ergonomic risks, evaluate and recommend proper protective measures, and identify any need for special medical monitoring. These evaluations are upon request of a department.
- Provide ergonomic training and technical assistance to supervisors and employees upon request, and maintain records of OSEH provided training.
- Serve as a University liaison for local, county, state, and federal agencies regarding ergonomic safety issues.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures have been prepared to provide a consistent approach to the ergonomic programs and resources administered by OSEH for the University.

A. Recognition of Risk Factors: Recognition of ergonomic risk factors is the first step in eliminating ergonomic injuries. This may be accomplished using several resources provided by OSEH.

- [Self-Help](#) materials are available on the OSEH website to provide education on recognition of risk factors and methods to reduce or eliminate the potential for injuries.
- OSEH provides [Ergonomic Training](#) for units to assist supervisors and staff recognize injury potential and methods to reduce the possibility of injury.
- Finally, a personalized [Workstation Assessment](#) can be conducted by OSEH staff by contacting our department at 647-1142. An assessment will be scheduled with one of our health and safety professionals and recommendations will be provided to the supervisor on methods to correct any identified ergonomic concerns.

A review of information available on the [OSEH Ergonomic webpage](#) is provided below:

- The [Introduction](#) section provides basic information about Ergonomics injury and how it impacts on work performance.
- A [Self-Help](#) section provides information to assist with a variety of basic office furniture and equipment set-up tips.
- [Exercise](#) examples are provided and should be performed during the workday to reduce discomfort and pain that may result from working in awkward or sustained postures.
- The [Training](#) section describes the various types of training classes offered by OSEH, as well as how to schedule you for the training. Monthly Ergonomic Training is offered at the OSEH office and on-site training sessions can be customized to fit all work environments. Ergonomic [videos](#) are listed and are available for loan to departments who wish to conduct their own awareness training.

- The [Product Loan](#) section lists ergonomic office chairs and equipment available from OSEH for trial use prior to purchase. This is important in that no one chair will solve every individual's ergonomic problems – it is important to obtain a proper fit. OSEH staff is available to assist you in selecting the appropriate chair for your situation.
- The [Workstation Assessment](#) section provides information about how to request an assessment and what to expect once the request is processed.
- The [Additional Links](#) section provides more detailed information about ergonomics and products available in the market place.

B. Managing Ergonomic Injuries: The University of Michigan manages ergonomic injuries using the system established by Work Connections. Typically injuries occurring in a workplace setting will be medically managed by the University occupational health provider M-Works. The M-Works staff work with OSEH in identifying and managing workplace ergonomic injuries in order to provide treatment to the individual and to identify methods to prevent reoccurrence. If an employee sustains a work-related injury, the supervisor should complete the [Work Connections Illness and Injury Report Form](#) and follow the directions on the Work Connections website to obtain proper medical treatment and follow-up.

C. Ergonomic Corrective Measures: Once a worksite evaluation is completed by OSEH, a report will be provided to the supervisor on actions that can be taken to alleviate the potential for ergonomic injuries. It is then up to the department to review the OSEH recommendations and take actions they deem appropriate to implement the recommendations. OSEH staff will work with the department in efforts to find the most economical solutions to the issues identified.

**TECHNICAL
SUPPORT:**

All reference guidelines and other documents are available through OSEH (647-1143) or the [OSEH Website](#).