

Office Workstation Musculoskeletal Injuries Prevention Policy



1. POLICY STATEMENT

ABC Company recognizes that those of you who work in video display terminals (VDTs), computer workstations or other office settings are at risk of suffering what are known as musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs), defined as injuries or disorders of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue, including a sprain, strain, and inflammation. ABC Company is committed to making you aware of and protecting you from the MSI hazards you face, whether you work in a Company office facility or from a home office.

2. PURPOSE

ABC Company has adopted this Policy for the purpose of fulfilling the above commitment and ensuring compliance with the [jurisdiction] *Occupational Health and Safety Act* ("Act"), *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* ("Regulations") and other applicable requirements and standards.

3. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy:

- **"Administrative controls"** means the provision, use, and

scheduling of work activities and resources in the workplace, including planning, organizing, staffing, and coordinating, for the purpose of controlling risk;

- **“Board”** means the BC Workers’ Compensation Board (aka WorkSafeBC);
- **“Engineering controls”** means the physical arrangement, design, or alteration of workstations, equipment, materials, production facilities, or other aspects of the physical work environment, for the purpose of controlling risk;
- **“Local contact stress”** means a risk factor for MSIs posed by physical contact between the knee, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand, inside of fingers, or other body tissues in a small, localized area of the body and objects in the work environment such as tools and machinery that can harm blood flow and nerve function;
- **“Practicable”** means that which is reasonably capable of being done;
- **“Task variability”** means a risk factor for MSI based upon the nature of the work—the longer the time a task remains unchanged, unvaried, or uninterrupted, the less likely the affected tissues are to return to a resting state for recovery;
- **“Work rate”** means a risk factor for MSI that refers to the speed at which tasks are carried out;
- **“Work-recovery cycle”** means a risk factor for MSI that refers to the availability and distribution of breaks in a particular activity to allow the tissue to return to a resting state for recovery;
- **“Workstation”** means a place in an office setting, including a home office, where work gets done typically consisting of a chair, desk, computer monitor, keyboard, lighting fixtures and other office furnishings.

4. WORKERS THIS POLICY IS INTENDED TO PROTECT

The intent of this Policy is to ensure that all workers

engaged to work at ABC Company in an office workstation are protected from MSI hazards, regardless of whether they work from a Company facility or a home or remote setting.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Employer

ABC Company owners, corporate officers and directors, upper managers, and other representatives who are defined as an “employer” under the Act will oversee this Policy and ensure it is effectively carried out and that:

- All resources necessary to implement this Policy are provided; and
- This Policy is appropriately reviewed, in consultation with any workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (“Safety Committee”) or Health and Safety Representative (“Safety Representative”).

5.2. OHS Coordinator

The ABC Company Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, facility manager, or other designated individual in charge of safety at the workplace is responsible for day-to-day implementation of this Policy, including ensuring that:

- A proper MSI hazard identification and assessment is carried out for all office workstations in which affected workers work, including those who work from home or in remote locations;
- The Safety Committee or Safety Representative and affected workers are consulted in the hazard identification and assessment process;
- Appropriate controls are selected and implemented to address identified MSI hazards;
- All workers exposed to workstation MSI hazards receive prevention and awareness training, information, and instruction;

- All affected workers are aware of and follow safe work procedures for performing tasks that involve MSI risks;
- This Policy is appropriately reviewed, in consultation with the Safety Committee or Safety Representative.

5.3. Supervisors

Supervisors of workers who work in office workstations are responsible for ensuring those workers receive the necessary supervision, instruction, and MSI training and education they need to work safely and may also be called upon to perform or participate in the measures set out in this Policy, including:

- MSI hazard identification and assessment, including within a home office;
- Selection and implementation of MSI controls;
- Delivery of MSI training and education to workers;
- Review of safety measures and this Policy.

5.4. Safety Committee/Safety Representative

The Safety Committee or Safety Representative is responsible for supporting this Policy and consulting with ABC Company with regard to:

- MSI risk identification, assessment, and control;
- The content and provision of worker MSI training and education;
- Evaluation of safety measures taken; and
- Annual review of this Policy.

5.5. Workers

Workers will support this Policy and help implement it by:

- Carrying out the required MSI hazard assessment of their home offices or providing access to their home office so that the assessment may be performed by a supervisor or other competent person designated by ABC Company;
- Performing regular inspection of or providing access to

their home office so that the inspection may be performed by a supervisor or other competent person designated by ABC Company;

- Ensuring that they are aware of and follow safe work practices for eliminating or controlling MSI risks;
- Participating in MSI training including gaining an understanding of the signs and symptoms of the MSIs their work could cause;
- Following their MSI training when doing their jobs;
- Using all required personal protective equipment (“PPE”);
- Notifying their supervisors if they are experiencing signs or symptoms of MSI;
- Reporting MSI hazards or potential hazards to their supervisor in accordance with the Section 04 – Workplace Hazard Notification Policy;
- Taking part, when requested, in a workplace inspection.

6. HAZARD ASSESSMENT

6.1. MSI Risk Factors

ABC Company will designate qualified personnel to identify factors in the workstation that may expose workers to the risk of MSIs. Once identified, such factors will be assessed to determine the hazards they pose to workers. MSI hazard identification and assessment will take into account risks created by:

- The physical demands of work activities, including:
 - Force required to do them;
 - Repetition;
 - Duration of the stress imposed;
 - Work postures required to perform the activity; and
 - Local contact stresses;
- The physical layout and condition of the workplace or workstation, including:

- Working reaches;
- Working heights;
- Seating; and
- Floor surfaces;
- The characteristics of objects handled, including:
 - Size and shape;
 - Load condition and weight distribution; and
 - Container, tool, and equipment handles;
- The environmental conditions, such as:
 - Temperature;
 - Lighting; and
 - Glare;
- How the work is organized, including:
 - Work-recovery cycles;
 - Task variability; and
 - Work rate.

6.2. MSI Hazard Identification & Assessment Methods

For workstations located at ABC Company offices, buildings or facilities, MSI risk factor identification and assessment of workstations at ABC Company offices and facilities will be carried out by a supervisor; for workstations located at a home office or other remote location, MSI risk factor identification and assessment of workstations at ABC Company offices and facilities will be carried out by the actual worker(s) who works in the space, a supervisor or a competent person designated by ABC Company to which the worker(s) will grant access. In either case, methods of assessment may include:

- Direct observation of workers performing work activities involving or potentially involving MSI risk;
- Review of records that may offer insight into the hazard posed by the work activity, including but not limited to:
 - Logs and summaries of injuries to workers

- performing the activity;
- Records of complaints of MSI symptoms by workers performing the activity;
- Workers' compensation claims for injuries or disabilities by workers performing the activity;
- Workplace audit results; and
- Recommendations and findings of outside consultants.

7. MSI HAZARD CONTROLS

In consultation with the Safety Committee or Safety Representative, ABC Company will implement measures to eliminate, or if total elimination is not practicable, minimize the risk of MSIs identified during the assessment in accordance with the following hierarchy of controls principles:

- Where practicable, ABC Company will use engineering controls such as workstation design, ergonomically designed tools, lifting equipment, to eliminate or minimize MSI risks;
- Workers who work in a home office or other remote location will cooperate with ABC Company in configuring their workstation in accordance with the MSI Ergonomic Guidelines attached to this Policy as Exhibit A;
- Where total elimination of MSI risks by engineering controls is not practicable, ABC Company will use administrative controls including safe work procedures and scheduling practices to eliminate or minimize MSI risks;
- ABC Company will require use of PPE such as gloves, anti-fatigue mats, knee pads, and cushioning inside footwear in combination with and **as a complement** to engineering or administrative controls;
 - PPE will be used **as a substitute** for engineering and administrative controls only if circumstances

where engineering and administrative controls are not practicable to use;

- ABC Company will, without delay, implement interim MSI control measures when delays are incurred to the implementation of permanent control measures.

8. TRAINING & EDUCATION

ABC Company will ensure that every office workstation worker exposed to MSI hazards receives before such exposure occurs:

- Notification about the MSI risks they face on the job;
- Education in risk identification related to the work, including how to recognize the signs and common symptoms of MSIs, the potential health risks posed, and how to respond if they detect such signs and symptoms;
- Training and instruction about the control measures taken to eliminate or minimize those MSI risks and how to use them, including any safe work procedures, mechanical aids, or PPE required.

ABC Company will consult with the Safety Committee or Safety Representative on the content and provision of such worker MSI education and training.

9. INSPECTION & MONITORING

ABC Company will constantly monitor this Policy with such efforts to include regular inspections of office workstations to ensure that effective ergonomic measures remain in place. MSI inspections of workstations in home offices or remote settings will be carried out either by the worker(s) who work there or by a supervisor or other competent person designated by ABC Company to which the workers will grant access for purposes of inspection.

10. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed, in consultation with the Safety Committee or Safety Representative, or directly with workers

when no Committee or Representative exists, at least once a year and more frequently as circumstances dictate.