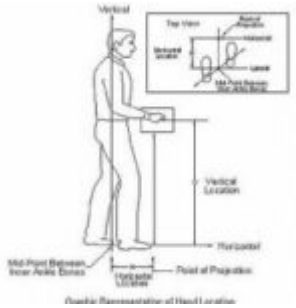
Poorly Designed Work Stations Top List of Ergonomics Hazards



One of the prime sources of workplace injuries, particularly musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs), is ergonomics-related hazards. And MSIs account for about 40% of all workers' comp claims in Canada.

We recently asked what the biggest ergonomics-related hazard was in your workplace. You said:

- Poorly designed work stations (30%)
- Repetitive motions (27%)
- Improper lifting techniques (23%)
- Infrequent breaks (11%)
- Awkward work procedures (9%).

The OHS laws require employers to protect workers from ergonomics-related hazards. Fortunately, addressing such hazards once you've identified and assessed them is often fairly simple'and inexpensive.

For example, you can protect workers from injuring themselves when lifting or otherwise moving materials by implementing appropriate manual materials handling procedures and training workers on safe lifting techniques.

You may also be able to address poorly designed work stations by lowering shelves, raising seats or making other minor

adjustments suited to the workers using those stations.

And effective ergonomics programs can even save your company money. Read about a textile plant in Ontario that saved almost $300,000 from its ergonomics program.

The OHS Insider's Ergonomics Compliance Centre has many articles, tools and other resources you can use to protect your workers from developing MSIs and address ergonomics-related hazards in your workplace, including:

- Model Worker MSI Symptom Survey
- Ergonomic Risk Factor Checklist
- Lifting Hazard Assessment Checklist
- Checklist for Evaluating Ergonomics Programs
- Form for Investigating Neck, Shoulder and Upper Back Injuries
- Form for Investigating Injuries to the Hips, Knees and Feet
- Form for Investigating Elbow, Forearm and Hand Injuries.

And for materials you can use to train workers on MSIs and ergonomics-related hazards, go to Safety Smart, where you'll find:

- 35 safety talks for workers on ergonomics
- 36 articles on this topic
- several e-learning courses.