

OSHA Ergonomic Guidelines

Why Does OSHA Have Ergonomic Guidelines?

The OSHA guidelines are in place to help companies reduce musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) developed by workers. MSDs are a large category of disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, or spinal discs.

Work related MSDs usually develop following repetitive movements such as reaching, bending, lifting, or using continuous force. The typical symptoms include persistent pain, swelling, tingling, numbness, or loss of movement around the affected area.

Why Should Your Firm Follow These Guidelines?

According to 1997 OSHA information, a total of 626,000 work days were lost due to MSDs, 34% of all work related injuries were MSDs, and 1/3 of all worker's compensation claims went to pay for MSDs. Companies utilizing an effective Ergonomic Management Program as an effective preventative tool, greatly reduces the severity and costs associated with these disorders.

A severe employee injury can cost an employer \$300,000. However a study of Workman's Compensation claims found a 60% drop in the reporting of symptoms, and 75% reduction in the cost (\$7000 per injury) through the implementation of an Ergonomic Program.

Several studies have shown that an ergonomic work space can improve worker productivity and accuracy between 10-20%. With less muscle stiffness, eye strain, and reduced stress, a worker will make fewer errors, work faster, and longer.

What Do the Guidelines Recommend?

Employers must discuss ergonomic issues with their employees. Employees need to be aware of work related MSDs, their signs and symptoms, and the importance of reporting them early. This means that all current and new employees should be trained in these areas.

In addition, if an employee suffers an injury, and their job exposes them to risk factors, an "Ergonomic Program" should be implemented to address the exposure.

What is an Ergonomic Program?

According to the OSHA guidelines, an Ergonomic Program should include:

- Management leadership
- Employee participation
- MSD management
- Job hazard analysis
- Hazard reduction
- Ongoing training

For more information on the Ergonomic Services at Thomas Interior Systems, please contact our Sales Department info@thomasinterior.com.

