



# Ergonomics

Real People

Real Problems

Real Solutions

## *Changes from November 1999 Proposed Ergonomics Standard*

On Nov. 23, 1999, OSHA proposed a standard to reduce work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in the workplace. That proposal called for ergonomics programs for individual jobs rather than workplaces, focusing on manual handling and manufacturing production positions. Since the proposal's announcement, OSHA received more than 8,000 written public comments and listened to more than 700 witnesses testify during public hearings. Based largely on the public's participation in this process, the final standard contains significant changes from the proposal. Some of those changes are highlighted below.

### Final Rule

#### **Scope of coverage**

Covers all general industry.

#### **Quick Fix option**

Allows more employers to use option; can use so long as there is not more than one MSD incident in a job and no more than two (2) MSDs in the establishment, within 18 months.

#### **Work Restriction Protection**

WRP benefits last until employee is able to safely return to work, or a health care professional (HCP) determines employee can never return to work, or 90 calendar days have passed, whichever comes first.

#### **Action Trigger**

When an MSD or signs or symptoms are reported, employer determines job relatedness using simple screening tool.

### November 1999 Proposal

Covered all general industry with special focus on manufacturing and manual handling jobs.

Not permitted if more than one MSD occurs within 36 months.

WRP benefits last until either employee is able to return to the job, or measures that eliminate MSD hazards have been implemented, or six months have passed.

Complex criteria involving one or more recordable MSDs occurring in an activity that constituted a core element of the job.



## Final Rule

### **Second Opinion from HCP**

When employer-selected HCP makes a determination about temporary work restrictions or work removal, an employee is entitled to an opinion from his/her own HCP. If both opinions differ, the employer may seek a third HCP opinion to resolve differences.

### **Basic Screening Tool**

Two-page checklist that identifies risk factors which could lead to an MSD hazard.  
Risk factors are: force, repetition, awkward postures, vibration and contact stress.

### **Steps to reduce MSD hazards**

Specific tools provided for job hazard analysis; eliminate MSD hazard or control to level indicated by tools, or reduce to extent feasible.

### **Grandfather Clause**

Compliance with fewer specific obligations and one year delay in implementation of MSD management, including work restriction protection.

### **Recordkeeping**

Employers with 11 or more employees required to maintain records for three years or until replaced by updated records.

### **Compliance Dates**

Provide information to employees within 11 months of standard's effective date.

*MSD Management* – within seven calendar days after job meets Action Trigger.

*Management Leadership and Employee Participation* – within 30 calendar days after job meets Action Trigger.

*Job Hazard Analysis* – within 60 calendar days after job meets Action Trigger.

## November 1999 Proposal

Not included.

Basic Screening Tool not included; three more risk factors than final, including whole body vibration, cold temperatures and static postures.

No specific tools provided for job hazard analysis. Compliance end points unclear.

Compliance required for basic obligations of all program elements, including work restriction protection.

Employers with 10 or more employees to maintain most records for only three years.

Provide initial information only to employees in manufacturing and manual handling.

Promptly when MSD is reported.

One year after standard's effective date.

Two years after standard's effective date.

**Final Rule**

*Implement Initial Controls* – within 90 calendar days after job meets Action Trigger.

*Implement Permanent Controls* – Not later than four years after standard's effective date.

*Program Evaluation* – within three years after job meets Action Trigger.

**November 1999 Proposal**

Implement "Interim" Controls two years after standard's effective date.

Three years after standard's effective date.

Three years after standard's effective date.