



# Ergonomics

Real People

Real Problems

Real Solutions

## *Worker Benefits*

About 1.8 million workers report MSDs, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, and back injuries each year. About 600,000 of those workers need to take time off work because of those injuries. In addition, based on evidence obtained during the rulemaking process, another 1.8 million workers each year experience MSDs that they do **not** report. OSHA's new ergonomics standard will prevent 4.6 million work-related musculoskeletal disorders or MSDs over 10 years, or an average of 460,000 per year (230,000 each from the reported and unreported groups of MSDs). That is nearly half a million workers who will not suffer each year from injuries that are easily preventable. This new ergonomics program standard will benefit 102 million workers at 6.1 million workplaces throughout general industry.

Under the standard, employers must:

- Give employees information on MSDs and their signs and symptoms, the importance of early reporting, and risk factors, jobs and activities associated with MSDs.
- Make available to employees a summary of the ergonomics standard.
- Include authorized employee representatives in ergonomic program.
- Institute a system to report MSDs, signs and symptoms of MSDs and MSD hazards.
- Give employees a prompt response to reports of MSDs, signs and symptoms of MSDs that last 7 days or longer, and MSD hazards.
- Institute a system of MSD management if an MSD or persistent signs and symptoms of an MSD occur in a job that includes risk factors at levels specified in the standard (Action Trigger). MSD management includes access to a health care professional, any necessary work restrictions or time off work to recover, work restriction protection and evaluation and follow-up.
- Provide a written opinion from a health care professional assessing the medical condition of an employee under the standard.
- Provide at no cost to employees any personal protective equipment necessary to control the MSD hazards in a job that cannot be fixed through work practices or engineering controls alone.



- Give employees an opportunity to seek a second opinion from a health care professional, at no charge, and a neutral third opinion if the first two health care professionals disagree.
- Institute a mechanism for resolving disagreements between health care professionals.
- Provide work restriction protection (WRP). WRP includes 100 percent of earnings and benefits if an employee must be on light duty, or 90 percent of earnings and 100 percent of benefits if an employee must stay home to recover from an injury. WRP continues until a worker returns to the former job, a health care professional determines the employee can never return to the former job, or for up to 90 days, whichever comes first.
- Give employees the opportunity to participate in job hazard analyses to determine whether a job is a “problem job” that needs to be fixed, and the opportunity to suggest ways to fix a problem job.
- Institute work practices or engineering controls necessary to correct a problem job.
- Provide employees whose jobs meet the Action Trigger training on the requirements of the OSHA standard, the ergonomics program at their workplace, signs and symptoms of MSDs, specific risk factors and any MSD hazards in their jobs, the employer’s plan and timetable for addressing MSD hazards, the controls used to fix the job, and the employee’s role in evaluating the effectiveness of the controls.
- Provide employees an opportunity to participate in the evaluation of the ergonomics program at least every three years.