Description

Ergonomics involves the arrangement of the work environment to fit the person. The use of ergonomic principles on the job helps to eliminate many potential injuries and disorders associated with overuse of muscles, bad posture, and repetitive motions.

In the workplace, ergonomics is the science of equipment design and work area layout intended to reduce worker fatigue and body stress. Making the "job fit the worker" by identifying and correcting ergonomics risk factors improves productivity and reduces the risk for musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Ergonomics can address:

- Repetitive motions.
- Forceful exertions.
- Cold temperatures.
- The use of hand tools.
- Vibration from power tools.
- Poor body mechanics.
- Restrictive workstations.
- Awkward postures.
- Lifting heavy or awkward objects.

This training session provides information on MSDs, ergonomic risk factors, and control measures.

Objectives

After your training program, the trainees should be able to:

- Recognize various types of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and their signs and symptoms.
- Identify MSD risk factors and understand control measures.
- Report MSD hazards and MSD signs and symptoms.
- Demonstrate safe lifting techniques.

Audience

Ergonomics risk factors are present in a wide variety of jobs. Employees who perform work involving repetitive motions, awkward postures, material handling, forceful exertions, etc. can benefit from training in ergonomics. During the presentation, emphasize how the material directly affects the employees to give the training more impact.

Requirements

Although no regulation covers ergonomic hazards on the job, OSHA enforces ergonomic guidelines under the general duty clause of the OSH Act of 1970.

OSHA began looking for ergonomic problems during inspections in 1986. In 1990, the agency published its Ergonomic Program Management Guidelines for Meatpacking Plants.

On November 16, 2000, OSHA published a final ergonomics program standard that would have applied to general industry employers. However, Congress overturned OSHA's ergonomics rule in March 2001 through the use of the Congressional Review Act. Until OSHA goes through the rulemaking process to promulgate a new final rule, employers must meet the general duty clause requirements to provide a safe and healthful workplace in regards to ergonomics-related hazards.

Suggested elements of a complete ergonomics program include:

- Management leadership and employee participation
- Hazard information and reporting
- Job hazard analysis and control
- Training
- Musculoskeletal disorder management
- Program evaluation

An ergonomics program is likely to fail without the backing of management or the participation of employees.