



Purpose

The University of Chicago shall take the necessary steps to prevent or reduce the severity of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). This policy explains the ways in which this will be accomplished.

Applicability

This policy, and all the requirements and related programs stated within, apply to all University of Chicago employees.

The steps to be taken in the Ergonomics program include, but are not limited to, engineering controls, administrative controls, work practice controls, and the provision of personal protective equipment.

Hazard Prevention

Engineering Controls: The preferred method of controlling ergonomic stresses since the primary focus of ergonomic hazard abatement is to make the job fit the person, not force the person to fit the job.

The following engineering control principles need to be considered when designing a work station or recommending corrective measures: Workstations shall be designed to accommodate the person who actually works at a given station and not for an average or typical employee; Workstations shall be designed so that the station can be adjusted easily to accommodate the employee assigned to the station and the equipment used at the station shall be designed for that purpose; and Tasks performed by the employee in the performance of his/her responsibilities shall be designed to prevent extreme postures, repetitive motion, excessive force, and static work

Administrative Controls: Administrative controls are changes in the way work in a job is assigned or scheduled that reduce the magnitude, frequency, or duration of exposure to ergonomic risk factors.

Examples of administrative controls for MSD hazards include the following: Rotate employees to different tasks, reduce the number of repetitive motions, job task enlargement, alternative tasks, and employer-authorized changes in work pace.

Work Practice Controls: An effective program for ergonomic hazard prevention and control also includes procedures for safe and proper work practices that are understood and followed by managers, supervisors, and employees and include the following: Proper work techniques, employee training and conditioning, and proper housekeeping.

Personal Protective Equipment: Personal protective equipment such as gloves, padding, clothing, or equipment shall be designed for the intended purpose. If as part of the investigation it is recommended by Environmental Health and Safety that personal protective equipment is needed, the investigator shall recommend several products. Every effort shall be made to resolve the problems using engineering and administrative controls.

Additional Information

Workstation Design Guidelines

Environmental Health and Safety recommends that the "Workstation Guidelines" in [Workstation Recommendations](#) be used as a guide while working at the computer workstation.

Training

Environmental Health and Safety shall facilitate training of employees covered by this policy. The curriculum of the training program shall, at a minimum, cover the following:

- Awareness of the common MSDs and their signs and symptoms;
- The importance of reporting MSDs and their signs and symptoms as soon as possible and the consequences of failing to report them early;
- How to report MSDs and their signs and symptoms in the workplace;
- The risk factors, jobs, and work activities associated with MSD hazards; and
- The contents and availability of this policy.