



Fact Sheet

1910.900 Ergonomics Program Standard Summary

Effective Jan. 16, 2001

What is the purpose of the new Ergonomics Program Standard?

The purpose of the standard is to reduce the number and severity of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), including back injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis through ergonomic programs that identify and control MSD hazards. The standard does not address injuries caused by slips, trips, falls, vehicle accidents or similar mishaps.

What is an MSD?

MSDs are disorders of the joints, tendons, muscles, ligaments, spinal discs and nerves. MSDs are caused by working conditions, such as awkward positions (i.e. reaching overhead); forceful movement (i.e. moving patients); repetitive motion (i.e. data entry); or vibration from equipment (i.e. using jack hammers).

Who is covered by the standard?

The standard covers all employers in general industry (1910), postal services and some public-sector employers. The standard excludes construction, maritime, agriculture and railroad operations.

As an employer, what do I need to do first?

The standard requires that you inform your employees in writing and post in the work place the following information by Oct. 14, 2001:

- Common MSDs and their signs and symptoms;
- How to report MSDs and the importance of early reporting;
- Risk factors that cause MSDs;
- Requirements of the ergonomics standard.

What should I do when I suspect an MSD?

First, determine if the injury meets the definition of an MSD incident. An MSD is considered an MSD incident if it requires assignment to a light-duty job or temporary removal from work to recover, or requires medical treatment beyond first aid; or an MSD is work related and lasts for seven or more consecutive days after reporting.

If the injury qualifies as an MSD incident, you then must use the checklist provided by OSHA to determine if it meets the Action Trigger. If the injury meets the Action Trigger, you must either implement a quick fix (see back page for definition) or implement an ergonomics program.

What elements must an ergonomics program have under the standard?

The standard requires that an ergonomics program has these elements:

- 1) Management leadership
 - Assign a decision maker, communicate responsibility and provide resources to implement the program.

The ergonomics standard is administered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

- 2) Employee participation
 - Provide employees with a process for reporting MSD signs and symptoms. Involve employees in the implementation process.
- 3) Job-hazard analysis
 - Analyze the job with an appropriate hazard-identification tool. Talk with injured workers and their representatives, and observe workers while they perform their jobs. The employer also may use a job-hazard analysis conducted by a professional trained in ergonomics.
- 4) Hazard reduction
 - Eliminate or control MSD hazards. You can control MSD hazards by changing equipment and work practices. Identify and implement controls within 90 days and implement permanent controls within two years after a confirmed MSD or by Nov. 14, 2004, whichever is later.
- 5) Training
 - Employers must provide initial training and follow-up training every three years for workers in jobs that meet the standard's Action Trigger. Employers must train new employees within 14 days of hiring.
- 6) MSD management
 - Offer access to a health-care professional, provide work restrictions or temporary removal from work, if necessary. Obtain a written opinion from the physician for each evaluation conducted under this standard and provide a copy to the employee. Please consult the OSHA standard for the requirements of an MSD evaluation and second opinions.

Work Restriction Protection: Workers who have been placed on limited work restrictions must maintain their full earnings, rights and benefits for up to 90 calendar days until the employee recovers or is placed on permanent disability. Workers temporarily removed from work must receive their full rights and benefits, and at least 90 percent of their earnings for 90 days until the employee recovers or is placed on permanent disability.

For more information

For more details, contact OSHA directly or log on to their Web site at www.osha.com



Fact Sheet

1910.900 Ergonomics Program Standard Summary

What is the Quick Fix Option?

The Quick Fix Option allows employers to opt for a quick fix if only one MSD has occurred in a job and no more than two MSDs have been reported in the establishment in the last 18 months. If the employer cannot correct the problem in 90 days, the employer must implement a full ergonomics program. Employers must keep a record of the quick-fix process for each job for three years.

Must employer determine program effectiveness?

Yes. Employers must evaluate their ergonomics program at least every three years to make sure that it effectively identifies and reduces MSD hazards. Employers must consult workers and their representatives in the evaluation process.

Effective dates

Requirement

Time frame

Distribute information and respond to reports of injuries	Oct. 15, 2001
Determination of action trigger incident	Seven calendar days of MSD
MSD management	Seven calendar days after job meets the action trigger
Management leadership	30 calendar days after job meets the employee participation action trigger
Training (for workers, supervisors, and others involved in ergonomics program)	90 calendar days after job meets the action trigger
Training (new employees)	Within 14 days of hiring
Job-hazard analysis	60 calendar days after job meets the action trigger
Implement initial controls	90 calendar days after job meets the action trigger
Implement permanent controls	Within two years after job meets action trigger, or until Nov. 14, 2004, for initial compliance
Program evaluation	Three years after job meets the action trigger
Grandfather clause	The standard allows employers who already have implemented an effective program (before Nov. 14, 2000) to continue their program instead of the requirements of this rule. The program must be written and include all the program elements required by this standard. Employers must provide the MSD management and work-restriction protections within one year of the standard's effective date. At least one review of the elements and effectiveness must take place prior to Jan. 16, 2001.

If an employer discourages employees from participating in this program or reporting signs, symptoms, or hazards of MSDs in the work place, that employer will not qualify for grandfather status.

BWC is providing a summary of the 1910.900 Ergonomics Program Standard as a service to our customers.