

Section 5C: Workplace Health and Environmental Practices

Policy #7: Ergonomic Injury Prevention

Effective Date: December 15, 2016

Last Revision Date: Original Policy

I. Purpose

The Town of Mooresville will maintain an Ergonomics program to ensure the well-being of all employees when work practices, or exposure to other risk factors, may cause, aggravate, or contribute to injuries or disorders of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels, or soft tissue. Implementation and maintenance of this Ergonomic Injury Prevention program is intended to identify, minimize, or eliminate Town employee exposures to the risk of musculoskeletal injury in the workplace.

II. Scope

The Ergonomic Injury Prevention Program applies to all Town of Mooresville employees whose job duties expose them to ergonomic risk factors and provides the framework for the reduction in both the frequency and severity of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). This framework will assist in the identification and control of ergonomic risk for the Town of Mooresville so that affected personnel understand their role in the Ergonomic Injury Prevention program. Ergonomics is an important factor in every job or task performed in the Town, ranging from working at a computer workstation to gathering refuse, shoveling, lifting boxes, cutting grass, and operating vehicles. Improving workplace ergonomics can improve concentration, comfort, and efficiency, as well as prevent a variety of related injury and illnesses. (DHHS, 1997)

III. Background

Ergonomics is the study of people and their interaction with the elements of their job or task including equipment, tools, facilities, processes, and environment. In practical terms, ergonomics is the science of human comfort. When aspects of the work or workplace exceed the body's capabilities, the result is often a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). To help avoid MSDs, work demands should not exceed the physical capabilities of the worker. MSDs are also known by several other names including:

- CTDs (cumulative trauma disorders, the most common name)
- RSIs (repetitive stress or repetitive strain injuries)
- RMIs (repetitive motion injuries)
- Overuse syndrome

The causes of these injuries are prolonged work involving repetitive movements, forceful movements, and awkward body postures. MSDs are painful and often disabling injuries which affect mainly the wrists, back, legs, shoulders, neck, muscles, and joints. Scientific evidence shows that effective ergonomic interventions can lower the incidence and severity of MSDs. (DHHS, 1997)