

ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Program is meant to identify and minimize musculoskeletal disorders and repetitive motion injuries that have the potential to arise in the course of employment with the County of Mariposa. The Ergonomics Program Officer is Rhonda Scherf.

Specific responsibilities are set forth in the Program in the following categories:

- County of Mariposa (as an organization)
- Ergonomics Program Officer
- Administration
- Employees

The Program is comprised of seven elements:

- Training
- Surveillance
- Evaluation
- Control Strategies
- Follow-up
- Communication
- Documentation
- Equipment Purchasing

All County of Mariposa employees are expected to participate in the Ergonomics Program. Failure to do so may result in injury and/or illness, lost time from work, reduced morale and quality of work, and/or disciplinary action in accordance with County policies.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to identify repetitive motion and other ergonomics hazards at County of Mariposa and implement risk reduction methods to minimize the occurrence of such injuries and help improve the quality of life in Mariposa County through the efficient delivery of outstanding public services.

SCOPE

The Ergonomics Program applies to all employees of County of Mariposa, including regular part-time and full-time employees, and contract employees who are under County of Mariposa's direct control and supervision.

RISK OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to follow this program may result in increased injury or illness to employees, resulting in long term or permanent changes to the employees' safety and health.

DEFINITIONS

Ergonomics: The study of the relationship between people, their work and their physical work environment. The major goal of ergonomics is to fit the job to the individual and promote healthy and safe work practices.

Risk Factors: Poor workplace designs can present stressors called risk factors. These risk factors may include:

- **Repetition** – the number of motions or movements that are performed per cycle/shift.
- **Force** – the power of the muscles used to produce motion in order to perform necessary activities such as lifting, grasping, pinching, pushing, etc.
- **Extreme Postures** – when muscles are required to work at a level near or at their maximum capacity.

Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD): An injury or illness of the soft tissues of the upper extremity, shoulders and neck, lower back, and lower extremity that is primarily caused or exacerbated by workplace risk factors, such as sustained and repeated exertions or awkward postures and manipulations. (Examples include: tendonitis, epicondylitis, rotator cuff syndrome, low-back pain.)

Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI): Also known as repetitive stress injuries, an RMI is a type of stress injury that results from repetitive motions such as frequent bending or sustained awkward positioning performed over extended periods of time without allowing for sufficient rest. Examples of RMI are medical conditions resulting from repeated use of a body part.

ERGONOMICS PROGRAM OFFICER

Rhonda Scherf serves as the Ergonomics Program Officer and administers the responsibilities outlined within this program as applicable. The Program Officer can be reached at (209) 742-1233.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. County of Mariposa

- Set an expectation for compliance with the program.
- Allocate appropriate resources to implement and execute the program.
- Ensure operating and business needs integrate the requirements of the program.
- Integrate ergonomics principles into new or changed work designs, programs, specifications, and standards for equipment and work tasks.

2. Ergonomics Program Officer

- Coordinates the development, implementation, and maintenance of the Ergonomics Program in accordance with the County of Mariposa Injury and Illness Prevention Program.
- Fields requests for ergonomic evaluations.
- Involves management in ergonomic evaluations and development of control strategies.
- Promotes a pro-active approach and encourages employee notification of discomfort to ensure risk factors are identified and minimized before an injury occurs.
- Monitors reports of employee injury and illness to ensure risk factors are identified and minimized.
- Upon diagnosis of a repetitive motion injury, conducts an ergonomic evaluation, ensures corrective action is taken, and arranges refresher training for all employees who perform the same or similar work activities that led to the injury.
- Maintains documentation of training, evaluation results, and control strategies implemented.
- Tracks and communicates regulatory requirements for ergonomics.
- Updates the written Ergonomics Program as needed; reviewed at least annually.

3. County of Mariposa Administration

- Incorporate employee participation and support of Ergonomics Program into annual performance review.
- Encourage employees to recognize and report possible RMI symptoms for early intervention.
- Recognize workplace conditions, work behaviors, and tasks that increase an employee's risk of developing RMIs.
- Initiate and participate in ergonomic evaluations and control strategy development with employees.

- Implement ergonomics principles into work designs, programs, specifications, and standards for equipment and work tasks.
- Ensure implementation of feasible control strategies to eliminate or minimize RMI risk factors, including modifications to work procedures and/or pace.

4. County of Mariposa Employees

- Complete required training by the established deadline.
- Use available resources to learn the causes of RMIs and methods of prevention.
- Take personal responsibility for identifying RMI risk factors, communicating this information with supervisors, and applying control strategies to prevent RMIs.
- Communicate ergonomics concerns to supervisor or Ergonomics Program Officer.
- Participate in the evaluation of the work area for potential risk factors and in development and implementation of control strategies.
- Correctly use the control strategies provided to reduce potential risk factors.
- Promptly report any discomfort or pain associated with a work task or operation to supervisor or Ergonomics Program Officer.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1. Training

Employees will be provided training as part of the New Employee Orientation required for all new hires and substitutes that includes an explanation of:

- The County of Mariposa Ergonomics Program
- Risk factors associated with RMIs
- Symptoms and consequences of RMIs
- The importance of promptly reporting symptoms and injuries
- Methods used by County of Mariposa to minimize RMIs

2. Monitoring

Gather information to determine the scope and characteristics of RMI exposures in the workplace. Indicators may include a review of:

- Reports of occupational injuries/illnesses
- Incident investigations
- Hazard assessments

- Employee reports of discomfort, fatigue, or difficulties performing tasks

3. Evaluation

A formal ergonomic evaluation will be conducted within 14 days of a new employee's date of hire. Evaluations include:

- Employee reports of discomfort or any concerns with the workstation
- Description of and amount of time spent on different work activities and job tasks, and employees work and break schedule
- Description of current workstation set-up
- Any changes made to existing equipment during the evaluation
- Summary of discussions regarding work habits/body mechanics changes
- Recommendations for workstation corrections

Evaluations may also be conducted at any time upon employee request.

4. Control Strategies

The development and implementation of control strategies include engineering controls, administrative controls and/or personal protective equipment. More than one strategy may be feasible for minimizing risk factors.

- Engineering Controls minimize risk factor exposure through appropriate design of the workplace and equipment. Examples of engineering controls include adjusting workstations, tables, chairs, and equipment; appropriate selection and use of equipment and tools, modifying the design and layout of work areas, equipment, and tools; changing the way tools and materials are stored, handled, used, and transported. Engineering Controls will be sought out as a first means of controlling risk.
- Administrative Controls minimize risk factor exposure through appropriate work practices. Examples of administrative controls may include training; developing specific work programs and practices; reducing time spent on a particular work task; adjusting work pace, tasks, or schedule; rotating tasks among several employees; varying job content, programs, or schedule to offset risk factors.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) minimizes risk factors by providing a barrier between the employee and the risk factor. Examples of PPE include padding, gloves, or safety glasses. PPE shall not be used as a substitute for feasible engineering or administrative controls. Back belts, splints, or braces are NOT considered PPE and should only be used as prescribed by a licensed physician.

5. Follow-up

Conduct and document follow-up evaluations to determine effectiveness of implemented controls. If control strategies are found to be ineffective during the follow-up evaluation, then different alternatives should be considered to address risk factors.

6. Communication

Share best practices and ergonomic improvements with management for review and possible system-wide implementation. This may include:

- Indicators of program effectiveness (e.g. reduction in number of illnesses, improved productivity)
- Ergonomics improvements

7. Documentation

Maintain documentation to meet the requirements of this program and Cal/OSHA regulations including:

- Training content
- Employee name and job title
- Instructor's name
- Date of training
- Ergonomics evaluations
- Control strategies implemented and date of implementation
- Follow-up evaluations and control changes

8. Equipment Purchasing

The Ergonomics Program Officer will facilitate the purchasing of recommended ergonomic equipment arising out of workstation evaluations in accordance with budgets and the approved ergonomic equipment list.

REFERENCES

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Link</u>
Cal-OSHA	Title 8	https://www.dir.ca.gov/samples/search/query.htm
Cal-OSHA	5110	https://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/5110.html