

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TITLE: Ergonomics Program

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1.0 Purpose

1. To provide policies and procedures for the protection of Clemson University (CU) employees from ergonomic risk factors.
2. To establish a university ergonomics program which provides CU employees with the following services:
 - Detection, correction, and prevention of musculoskeletal disorders by anticipating, identifying, and reducing ergonomic risk factors,
 - Promotion of awareness of ergonomic risk factors and proper reporting of signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders.

2.0 Scope and Application

The Ergonomics Program involves all CU employees whose job duties expose them to ergonomic risk factors. It is designed to coordinate the efforts of CU supervisors, employees, and Occupational and Environmental Safety (OES) to prevent occupational musculoskeletal disorders and eliminate or reduce ergonomic risk factors.

The primary tools OES employs to administer the Ergonomics Program to CU employees include:

- Training supervisors (including Deans, Directors, and Department heads) and employees in the awareness of and proper reporting of ergonomic risk factors and early reporting of signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders.
- Conducting workplace ergonomic risk assessments based on anticipated or reported ergonomics issues.
- Consulting on engineering and administrative ergonomic hazard reduction and control.
- Educating about the potential effects of ergonomic risk exposures
- Communicating with supervisors and employees on ergonomics solution alternatives.

This Ergonomic Program addresses all areas on campus. Including:

- Office spaces (at home or on premise)
- Shops
- Laboratories
- Classrooms

Each functional area shares the common goal of systematically identifying ergonomic risks (such as musculoskeletal) and prioritizing solutions to reduce employee risk exposures

Our goal through this Ergonomics Program is to prevent the occurrence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders by controlling or eliminating the risk factors which cause them. This program ensures that all affected employees are aware of job-related risk factors and provides information and solutions to elevate them. CU promotes continuous improvement for the efficiency, comfort, and well-being of all employees through a team effort of management and employee involvement

3.0 Definitions

- **Administrative Controls-** Control measure which includes short breaks, job rotation, and training.
- **Engineering Controls-** Control measures, which include but are not limited to: Devices (such as adjustable workstations, tables, chairs, ergonomic accessories, equipment, and tools) and physical modifications to workstations, equipment, tools, production processes, or any other aspect of the work environment.
- **Ergonomics-** an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely.
- **Ergonomic Hazards-** Workplace conditions that pose a biomechanical stress to the worker or that contribute to the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders. Such hazardous workplace conditions include, but are not limited to, faulty workstation layout, improper work methods, improper tools, and job design problems such as awkward postures, force requirements, and repetition rate.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders-** injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal discs.

4.0 Responsibilities

Occupation and Environmental Safety (OES)

OES is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of the Ergonomics Program. These responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and updating the Ergonomics Program.
- Conducting ergonomic assessments.
- Educating supervisors and employees about ergonomic risk factors and the potential harm to their bodies.
- Training employees and supervisors in the need for, and the methods of early reporting of musculoskeletal disorder signs and symptoms.
- Prioritizing ergonomic evaluations based on available severity, prevalence and incident rate data (e.g. OSHA logs, First Report of Injury, Workers' Compensation, discomfort surveys).
- Performing ergonomic risk factor measurements and observations and communicating results to supervisors (including Deans, Directors, and Department heads) and employees.
- Establishing a job hazard analysis and control process that identifies, analyzes, and uses feasible engineering, work practice, controls to eliminate musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) hazards that reduce MSD hazards to the extent feasible.
- Establishing ways to evaluate controls to assure that they are effective.

Supervisors

Supervisors (including Deans, Directors, and Department heads) are key personnel in promoting and maintaining a safe, local work environment. Supervisory responsibilities related to the Ergonomics Program are to:

- Ensure that ergonomics training is provided to employees and refer employees to the OES website for information.
- Encourage early reporting of signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders or concerns.
- Notify OES of changes to workplace processes or equipment that may change (increase or decrease) ergonomic risk factors.
- Work with OES to determine equipment needs when needed to reduce ergonomic risk factors.

Employees

As the group most directly impacted by musculoskeletal disorders and their related discomfort and potentially disabling effects, employees are to:

- Report early signs and symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders.
- Follow work practice procedures related to their jobs that are intended to reduce ergonomic risks.
- Actively participate in the recognition, analysis, and abatement of ergonomic risks.

5.0 Ergonomic Assessment

Self-Assessment

OES has created a self-ergonomic assessment that can be completed by any employee at any time. The assessment is primarily for office settings. This assessment can be found on the BioRaft software. All that is needed to complete the assessment is employee Clemson credentials (username and password). This assessment is in the form of a checklist. Employees can go through and check 'yes' or 'no' for various questions. A 'yes' represents what is preferred in terms of being more ergonomically acceptable. A 'no' lets employees know they have a problem in their space, and it may result in an ergonomic concern in the future if action is not taken to improve the issue. [BioRAFT at Clemson | Clemson University, South Carolina](#)

Employees can file a concern through OES's website under the Ergonomic section. ([Industrial Hygiene | Clemson University, South Carolina](#)) Employees will fill out the "Ergonomic Assessment Request Form" and it will automatically submit to OES. The form will ask for:

- Employee name
- Employee email
- Phone number
- Department/Job Title
- Date
- Supervisor
- A description of job tasks
- A description of current workstation (location, building, room, or remote)
- Reason for request
- Any photos to more adequately show concerns (optional).

OES will respond to requests and set up a meeting time to observe locations of concern. If the problem location is on campus, OES will come to the location and perform their observation. If the location is remote, OES will perform their observation via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or any other video chat mechanism.

6.0 Employee Training

All CU employees will receive General Awareness Ergonomic training with the goal of educating employees to recognize workplace musculoskeletal disorders and ergonomic hazards.

These are the elements taught to all employees:

- The general understanding and purpose of ergonomics.
- The signs and symptoms of work-related musculoskeletal disorders, and the importance of early detection.
- The understanding of ergonomic risk factors.
- The process CU employees can take to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders including, but not limited to, stretching, correcting the layout of workstations, and following proper techniques.
- The importance of self-ergonomic assessments when setting up your workstation (remotely or on premise).
- How to report an ergonomic concern and request an assessment from OES.