



Ergonomics Program

Injury and Illness Prevention

It is the commitment of Humboldt State University to maintain a safe and healthful environment for its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Based on principles of occupational safety, industrial hygiene, academic excellence, and fiscal responsibility, the University will promote comprehensive injury and illness prevention, and hazardous materials management programs. University operations shall be conducted in compliance with applicable regulations and accepted practices for health, safety and environmental protection.

1. Ergonomic Program Description

The purpose of the HSU Ergonomic Program is to prevent the pain and suffering, as well as costs to the University, associated with ergonomic related injuries. This is done through a combination of workplace training, evaluation of workstations and work practices, and the implementation of ergonomic control strategies.

2. Scope

The Ergonomics Program encompasses all HSU employees whose job functions have the potential for work related injuries and disorders. Certain aspects of our job tasks and work environments contain risk factors that may contribute to injury or disability. Through proper ergonomic assessment, potential injuries and disorders may be reduced, prevented and even eliminated.

The table below illustrates the relationship between work settings, job tasks, risk factors and body areas that may be affected.

Work Settings	Job Tasks	Risk Factors	Affected Body Areas
Office & Computer	Word Processing (typing), Data Entry and Web surfing (mouse use)	Frequency, Duration, Force	Hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders
Laboratory	Pipette use, microscope use	Posture, Frequency, Duration	Hands, arms, neck, back, legs
Manual Material Handling	Carrying and transporting heavy materials	Posture, Heavy exertion, Force	Back, arms, shoulders, legs

3. Definitions

3.1 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.

3.2 Ergonomic Stressors: Poor workplace designs can present ergonomic risk factors called stressors. These stressors may include:· Repetition – the number of motions or movements that are performed per cycle or per 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.

3.3 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.)

3.4 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.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Employees: It is the responsibility of HSU employees to access proper ergonomics training to improve their work practices if necessary.

4.2 Work Unit Specific Supervisor: It is the responsibility of each department head and/or supervisor to support or recommend proper training for ergonomics for staff. Additionally, they are responsible for implementation of EH&S ergonomic recommendations if necessary.

4.3 Environmental Health and Safety: It is the responsibility of EH&S to evaluate and monitor the ergonomics program including assessing the nature and extent of ergonomics hazards, recommending ways of minimizing or controlling these hazards, and supporting the University in consultation and direction regarding ergonomics.

5. Specific Program Components

5.1 Ergonomic Self-Evaluation

Access Cornell University's Ergonomics Web - ERGO TIPS at: <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/ErgoTips2002/home.html> , to perform a self-assessment of your workstation for potential ergonomic risk factors. If you are still unable to correct any ergonomic deficiencies, cont EH&S at extension 5711 and schedule a workstation evaluation.

You can also visit other websites that contain valuable information regarding self-evaluation such as UCLA Ergonomics at <http://www.ergonomics.ucla.edu> .

5.2 On-site Ergonomic Evaluation

Employees, Supervisors, or Department Heads may request an ergonomic assessment of work area(s) or work process by sending an e-mail to tfm7001@humboldt.edu , or contacting EH&S at extension 5711.

EH&S will conduct an ergonomic evaluation based on observations that include:

- Equipment used (mouse, keyboard, pipettes, microscope, etc.)
- Work environment including workspace, access, lighting and glare
- Specific tasks or job processes and percentages of time performing tasks
- Workstation alignment (employee, keyboard, and monitor in straight line)
- Keyboard height, tilt and distance from employee
- Mouse placement
- Monitor height, tilt, and distance from employee
- Chair height, back support, and adjustability
- Document placement
- Other employee practices that may be a contributing factor

EH&S will provide written documentation for eliminating or reducing the identified ergonomic risk factors to the employees and their supervisor. There are two general approaches to controlling ergonomics risks:

Engineering Controls - Changes are made to the workstations, tools, and/or machinery that alter the physical composition of area or process.

Administrative or Work Practice Controls - Changes are made to regulate exposure without making physical changes to the area or process; for example, taking frequent breaks and job rotations.

6. Reporting Requirements

If an employee experiences any signs or symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders, the employee is to report their symptoms to their supervisor.

Employees may also wish to consult their personal physicians to rule out any other underlying causes.

7. Information and External References

Cal/OSHA, Title 8 §5110, Repetitive Motion Injuries