

Trent Ergonomics Program

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PURPOSE	
Controlling workplace hazards involves taking steps to protect workers, and to avoid injuries, illnesses, and incidents. Workplace hazards must be managed in compliance with legislative requirements set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). Trent University's Ergonomics Program describes the responsibilities and actions designed to ensure that ergonomic practices will enhance worker health, safety, and well-being, while reducing the risk of workers exposure to Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) hazards.	
OBJECTIVES	
The objective of Trent University's Ergonomics Program is to promote physical and cognitive health by minimizing occupational risk factors commonly associated with musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), through the identification and application of various ergonomic control measures using the hierarchy of controls. Ergonomic principles address work organization and job design in order to decrease their potential to cause harm.	
SCOPE	
This program applies to all persons doing work on behalf of Trent university, including faculty, unionized workers, exempt workers, and student workers, as well as volunteers.	
RELATED DOCUMENTATION	
Internal Ergonomic Assessment Request Ergonomics Training and Resources	External Occupational Health and Safety Act Ontario Regulation 851: Industrial Establishments Workplace Safety and Insurance Act CSA Z412-17 – Office Ergonomics CSA 1004-12 (R2017) – Workplace ergonomics
DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS	
Control	Measures taken to mitigate the severity or likelihood of a hazard causing harm.
Control of hazards	Control of Hazards means taking steps to protect people and to help avoid injuries, illnesses and incidents.

Ergonomics	The scientific discipline that is concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a work system. It strives to ensure equipment and tasks can be designed, adjusted, and arranged according to the abilities, needs, and characteristics of workers.
Hazard	Anything (e.g., chemicals, moving vehicles, etc.) that can hurt any person (cause injury), make them sick (illness) or cause property damage.
Hazard Management Tool	A step- by- step approach to recognize hazards, assess risk, control hazards and monitor the ongoing effectiveness of controls. WSIB Hazard Management Tool
Hierarchy of Controls	A ranking of risk control methods from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest, including elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.
Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD)	Injuries and disorders of the musculoskeletal system (the muscles, tendons, tendon sheaths, nerves, bursa, blood vessels, bones, joints/spinal disks, and ligaments) that can be caused or aggravated by various hazards or risk factors in the workplace.
Illness (occupational)	The OHSA defines an occupational illness as a condition that results from exposure in a workplace to a physical, chemical or biological agent to the extent that the normal physiological mechanisms are affected, and the health of the worker is impaired.
Incident	May refer to an occurrence arising from any situation or task that resulted in, or had the potential to result in, injury, illness, damage to health or property, or fatalities.
Residual Risk	The risk remaining after the hierarchy of controls has been implemented.
Risk Assessment	The overall process used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification). Analyze the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis). Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).
Risk	Combination of the likelihood of the occurrence of harm and the severity of that harm.
Worker	Means any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled. • A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other post-secondary institution.
Workplace	Means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works, i.e. where the academic and administrative activities of Trent University take place.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer

Trent University's Board of Governors has delegated the responsibilities of Employer to the President and Vice-Presidents. Management commitment at all levels is critical for providing leadership, vision and the resources required to implement and effective Health & Safety management, including the ergonomics program.

Supervisors

The OHSA defines supervisor as "a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker." The identification of a supervisor in the university workplace can be difficult as there are many unique positions that can attract supervisory duties, for example: Associate Vice-Presidents, University Secretary, Deans, Directors, Principals, University Registrar, University Librarian, Managers, Supervisors, Academic Chairs, and Principal Investigators. Responsibilities of supervisors include:

- Identify and manage potential ergonomic hazards in the workplace by ensuring work follows ergonomic guidelines and best practices, and through the provision of ergonomic tools and equipment as appropriate.
- Encourage workers to report ergonomic hazards, incidents, concerns, or MSD injuries.
- Ensure workers are provided with training on ergonomics and arrange supplemental training, if required.
- Ensure the Human Resources Department, Health & Safety, is notified of any injuries reported to them, within 24 hours of the occurrence.
- Consult with or request the assistance of Health & Safety, as necessary.
- Where possible, provide funds from operating budget for the purchase of ergonomic equipment, as suggested by Health and Safety or a medical professional. Consult with Human Resources on the eligibility of expenses being covered through the Accommodation Fund.

Workers

- Report any ergonomic hazards, incidents, concerns, or MSD injuries to their direct supervisor. Feedback from workers is an essential means of identifying ergonomic hazards.
- Follow all written ergonomic procedures required for the work they are performing.

- Attend any training sessions deemed necessary by supervisors.

Human Resources Department, Health & Safety Office

- Administer the Ergonomics Program and review it regularly.
- Provide web-based training and classroom courses.
- Conduct ergonomic assessments.
- Maintain and provide ergonomic furniture and equipment for trial use by workers.
- Facilitate physical demands analysis of jobs and tasks, as needed.
- Review ergonomic data for trends, including but not limited to WSIB statistics, assessment requests, identified hazards, and reported discomfort.
- Provide technical and best practice advice pertaining to ergonomics.
- Arrange for third-party ergonomic consultation, as needed.

Joint Health and Safety Committee representatives

- Identify ergonomic hazards through workplace inspections.
- Bring forward employee concerns for committee discussion and review, as needed.
- Regularly review Trent University Ergonomics Program and make recommendations as needed.

PROCEDURE

General Approach to Ergonomics

Within the context of Health & Safety management, Trent University will utilize ergonomic principles in the design and operation of its work systems, to mitigate the physical and organizational hazards that work systems can impose on workers.

Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

The Health & Safety Office within the Department of Human Resources have established an ergonomic program, which allows for the proactive identification and assessment of hazards including those related to MSD. Risk assessments will consider information and seek input from the following:

- Worker concerns and hazard reports
- Incident investigations and illness/injury records
- Hazards listed on the Hazard Register
- Workplace inspections
- JHSC recommendations
- Utilization of the [Ergonomics Hazard Identification Checklist](#), found on the Health and Safety website.

Supervisors and managers shall encourage workers to report ergonomic hazards, discomfort, and injuries. In collaboration with relevant stakeholders, supervisors and managers will review information

with workers to identify, assess and control hazards. Where appropriate, a request can also be made to Health and Safety for an ergonomic assessment of the individual's workplace.

Ideally, ergonomic hazards should be identified and managed during the planning and procurement phases of work, before work begins. When this is not possible, risk must be assessed during the work operations, which incorporate worker participation. To support the Ergonomics Program, a variety of resources are available on the [Health & Safety website](#).

Hazard Elimination and Risk Control

In order to eliminate hazards and control the risks identified during ergonomic assessments, preventive and protective measures will be implemented. The first, and most effective control, is elimination. If this is not reasonably practicable, risk must be minimized by working through the levels of the [hierarchy of controls](#). In determining risk control measures, collaboration with workers, worker representatives and supervisors and managers is required.

Following an ergonomic risk assessment, the supervisor or manager responsible will indicate to the Health and Safety Office that in their judgement, the ergonomic process has been followed to arrive at risk controls that result in negligible or not significant residual risk.

Process for Addressing Worker Discomfort or MSD Hazards

Worker experiences discomfort or has a concern about their workstation and/or task. Worker to discuss their concerns with supervisor and utilize resources available on the [H&S website for guidance](#).

If issue is not resolved, worker to request an ergonomic assessment using the [ticket system to H&S](#). To request an ergonomic assessment of the individual's work area or tasks, visit the Health and Safety website and submit the Ergonomic Assessment Request Form. A copy of the request will be received by the worker's direct supervisor and Health & Safety, who will contact the employee to arrange for an assessment and next steps.

Health & Safety Office to assess the workstation, task, and/or equipment and make recommendations and adjustments. Health & Safety to provide report of observations, adjustments made, recommendations, and proposed changes to the worker and their supervisor. Supervisor to assist with implementation of recommendations, adjustments, and/or purchase of equipment, as necessary.

Monitor original issue for changes – Health & Safety follows up 2 weeks after changes have been implemented or sooner depending on severity of issue.

Employees will indicate the status of their reported discomfort and/or concerns through completion of a survey, provided to the employee two weeks after the assessment OR adjustments were made/new equipment has been implemented. Additional action may be taken by Health & Safety, including but not limited to, consulting with a third party, depending on the employee feedback.

COMMUNICATION
<p>All new staff will receive information on ergonomics and MSD hazards during orientation and new worker training.</p> <p>Periodic reminders will be communicated by the Joint Health and Safety Committee via email, Health and Safety bulletin website, and posted on workplace Health and Safety boards.</p>
TRAINING
<p>Online Training</p> <p>Online ergonomics training modules will be made available and should be reviewed before requesting an office ergonomic assessment. These are evidence-based and standard-compliant training programs designed for workers who regularly use computers on the job.</p> <p>In-Person Training</p> <p>In-person Ergonomic training is available from Health and Safety by request, particularly related to office workstations, manual material handling, repetitive tasks, and awkward postures. Supervisors can arrange training for their staff by contacting healthandsafety@trentu.ca</p>
EVALUATION
<p>The application of ergonomics is an ongoing process, operating at each stage of design, operation, decommissioning and disposal of a work system. Continuous monitoring is required to detect new hazards and highlight any ineffective controls.</p> <p>Management or supervisors should follow-up with relevant stakeholders during or shortly after changes have been made, for immediate feedback on hazard elimination, mitigation or to identify other concerns. When issues are identified, corrective action should be taken to fix the problem. Corrective actions should be recorded and progress monitored through to completion.</p> <p>Health and Safety shall review its Ergonomic program regularly to measure its effectiveness and identify any gaps or areas for improvement</p>
FORMS / RECORDS
<p>Trent University will create and maintain documents and records to demonstrate compliance with the Ergonomic Program. Records and documentation will assist with the implementation and monitoring of the ergonomic process, and will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and qualitative measurements taken during ergonomic assessments. Recommendations made following ergonomic assessments. Formal ergonomic reports. Records and documentation, which support compliance with the Ergonomic program. Injury statistics. Employee feedback surveys.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

CSA Z412-17 – Office Ergonomics – An application standard for workplace ergonomics.

CSA 1004-12 (R2017) – Workplace ergonomics – A management and implementation Standard.

Ergonomics in the workplace

Ergonomics in the workplace: understanding the law

MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, OSH Answer

CHANGES TRACKING	
DETAILS OF CHANGES	DATE CHANGED