

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & RADIATION SAFETY POLICY

Ergonomic Policy

Document#: OCC 028.01	Distribution: External
Section: Ergonomics	Effective Date: August 2023
Total Pages: 5	Revision Date:

Purpose

Temple University has established its Ergonomics Program to reduce or eliminate Risk Factors that can lead to Ergonomic Injuries. This program details the responsibilities of various groups and establishes procedures for requesting workplace assessments, reporting injuries, and training requirements.

Scope

This program is a service to all Temple University employees.

Definitions

Ergonomics: The process of designing tools, equipment, workstations, and tasks to fit the job to the worker rather than fitting the worker to the job.

Ergonomic Injury may result in musculoskeletal disorders throughout the body, or isolated in specific areas. These are soft tissue injuries caused by sudden or sustained exposure to repetitive motion, force, vibration, awkward or static posture, or contact stress.

Risk Factors: Work practices that may lead to injury. Include

- awkward posture – bending, twisting.
- contact stress – grasping or contact from loads, leaning against parts, or surfaces that are hard or have sharp edges.
- static posture – maintaining fixed positions for a long time.

- repetitive stress – frequent reaching, lifting, carrying.
- force – carrying or lifting heavy loads.

Roles and Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS) is responsible for

- When requested, conducting an ergonomic assessment.
- Providing training on ergonomic principles.
- Maintaining training records.

Employee Health Services is responsible for

- Requesting ergonomic assessments for employees presenting with potential Ergonomic Injuries.

Human Resources, which includes both Worker’s Compensation and Labor Relations, is responsible for

- Requesting an assessment for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations or if a Worker’s Compensation claim is filed related to Ergonomic Injuries.
- Purchasing equipment based on EHRS recommendations.

Supervisors are responsible for

- Complying with the requirements outlined in this program.
- Requesting a workplace assessment for their employees.
- Requesting ergonomic training for employees.
- Providing employees with the necessary equipment or changes in work and workplace design to reduce Risk Factors based on EHRS recommendations.
- Ensuring that employees are following recommendations as outlined in their workplace assessment.

Employees are responsible for

- Complying with the requirements outlined in this program.
- Requesting a workplace assessment.
- Requesting ergonomic training.
- Following recommendations as outlined in their workplace assessment.

Policy

Workplace Assessments

When requested, EHRS will conduct a workplace assessment. The goal of this assessment is to:

- Observe work practices and workplaces (including remote workplaces) to determine if Risk Factors are present in the workplace.
- Make recommendations for changes in work practices to reduce Ergonomic Injury.
- When needed, make recommendations for equipment to improve workplace ergonomics.
- Ensure implementation and compliance with this program.

EHRS will provide a report of the workplace assessment outlining corrective measures and recommendations.

Service Requests

Workplace assessments are based on 4 types of requests:

- Informational

Employees receiving an informational workplace assessment may have physical complaints but have not received a diagnosis from a doctor. Alternatively, they may also want information or may desire specific equipment for their workplace. Services include on-site adjustment of existing ergonomic equipment and training.

- Medical

When employees have been working with physicians to achieve a diagnosis, EHRS will, with the employees' permission, work with that diagnosis to customize ergonomic fixes to maximize reduction of Risk Factors related to that condition. Services include on-site adjustment of existing ergonomic equipment and training, as well as research into appropriate aids.

Employees who believe they may have an Ergonomic Injury must seek medical evaluation by contacting Employee Health Services. Employee Health Services staff will evaluate the employee and request an assessment if they believe there is an Ergonomic Injury caused by the workplace. If the employee is losing time due to the Ergonomic Injury, they will be required to complete a Workers' Compensation Incident Report Form.

- ADA accommodation

When employees have a known disability, EHRS will work in concert with the

Human Resources, Labor Relations to customize ergonomic fixes to meet their needs. This assessment may go beyond the workplace to assess every facet of the employees' duties while at work. Services include on-site adjustment of existing ergonomic equipment and training, as well as research into appropriate aids and/or adaptive technologies.

- Non-standard

Non-standard ergonomic assessments are typically performed in areas other than computer workstations. These may include, but are not limited to, laboratories, microscopy, housekeeping, dental suites, morgues, and shops. Services include on-site adjustment of existing ergonomic equipment and training.

Workplace Design

The following concepts should be utilized to reduce Risk Factors related to workplace design:

- Services needed by several employees should be placed in a central location.
- Regularly needed items should be placed within reach to avoid stretching or stooping.
- Seated workplaces should be provided with an adjustable chair.
- Desks and tables should allow for work to be done at elbow height. The height should allow for leg clearance.
- Task lighting should be considered for tasks requiring additional illumination.
- Control direct glare by positioning lighting as far from the employees as line of sight as practical, using indirect lighting, or using several low-intensity lights as opposed to one bright light.
- Control indirect glare by changing the orientation of the light, task, or workplace, or using non-polished surfaces when possible.

Work Design

The following concepts should be utilized to reduce Risk Factors related to work design:

- Provide recovery time (e.g., short rest breaks) to minimize muscle fatigue and static postures.
- Alternate heavy tasks with light tasks.
- Minimize manual handling of materials.
- Provide variety in jobs to eliminate or reduce repetition (i.e., overuse of the same muscle groups).
- Provide adequate equipment to complete the work, such as carts or carrier bags when moving objects.

- Modify work practices so that workers perform work within their power zone (i.e., above the knees, below the shoulders, and close to the body).
- Rotate workers through jobs that use different muscles, body parts, or postures.

Training

Training on ergonomic principles, risk factors, recognizing and reporting Ergonomic Injuries, and corrective measures is offered as part of each workplace assessment.

Recordkeeping

Reports of workplace assessments will be maintained by EHRIS and are retained for the duration of the employee's employment at TUH, Inc.