



PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – INJURY PREVENTION

November 2024

Introduction:

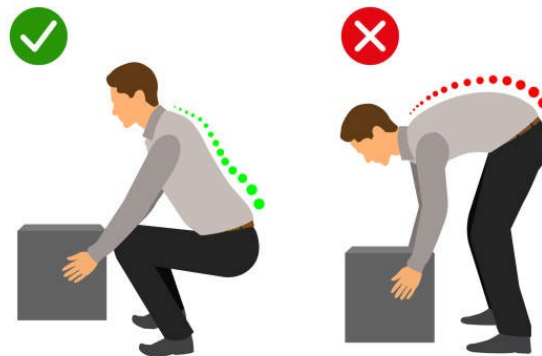
- Many tasks often involve physical labor, repetitive movements, and awkward postures, which can lead to injuries if not managed properly.

Understanding Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs):

- **Definition:** MSDs are injuries or disorders that affect the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. These can develop from the physical demands of our jobs.
- **Common Types of MSDs in Public Works:**
 - **Back Injuries:** Often due to improper lifting techniques.
 - **Repetitive Strain Injuries:** From tasks like digging, shoveling, or using power tools.
 - **Tendonitis:** Common in those who frequently use hand tools or equipment.

Recognizing Risk Factors:

- **Posture:** Poor posture during lifting or operating machinery can lead to injury.
- **Repetitive Movements:** Tasks such as shoveling snow or asphalt, operating equipment, or manual handling can strain muscles and joints.
- **Heavy Lifting:** Lifting heavy equipment or materials without proper technique increases injury risk.
- **Static Positions:** Prolonged periods of standing or bending can lead to fatigue and discomfort.



Ergonomic Principles:

1. **Proper Lifting Techniques:**



- Always assess the load before lifting. If it's too heavy, use mechanical aids or ask for assistance.
- Bend your knees, keep your back straight, and lift with your legs, not your back.
- Hold the load close to your body and avoid twisting while lifting.

2. Workstation and Tool Setup:

- When using tools or machinery, ensure they are at an appropriate height to avoid awkward bending or reaching.
- Use tools with ergonomic designs that reduce strain on your hands and wrists.

3. Movement and Stretching:

- Take regular breaks to move around and stretch.
- Suggested stretches include:
 - **Lower Back Stretch:** Stand tall, reach for the sky, and then gently bend to one side, holding for 15 seconds.
 - **Shoulder Rolls:** Roll your shoulders forward and backward to relieve tension.

4. Using Mechanical Aids:

- Whenever possible, use dollies, lifts, or other mechanical devices to move heavy materials.
- Make sure to maintain these tools to ensure they are safe and effective.



Creating a Culture of Safety:

- **Encourage Communication:** If you notice a colleague struggling or if you have concerns about a specific task, speak up. We're all responsible for each other's safety.
- **Report Discomfort:** If you experience pain or discomfort, report it to your supervisor immediately. Early intervention can prevent more serious injuries.

Response Procedures:

- **In Case of Injury:**
 - Report any injuries, no matter how minor, to your supervisor right away.
 - Seek medical attention if necessary and follow up with appropriate documentation.

Conclusion:



- Preventing MSDs is vital for our health and productivity. By following ergonomic principles and being proactive, we can reduce the risk of injuries in our physically demanding roles.
- Remember, taking care of our bodies helps us serve our community better.

