



Implementing Solutions

Examples of potential solutions for various ergonomic concerns are located in the Implementing Solutions section of this Module.

Addressing Reports of Injuries. Addressing reports of injuries is essential to the success of the ergonomics process. The goal of this effort is to ensure evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders. Addressing reports of injuries focuses vessel/installations' efforts on preventing MSDs in those specific jobs where injuries occur most often and are most severe. It also provides needed input into the management of the ergonomics process. Integrating health care providers into vessel/installation ergonomic efforts promotes returning to work more quickly and successfully. As a part of the ergonomics process, addressing reports of injuries:

- Reinforces employee training on the recognition of the indications of MSDs and the necessary procedures for reporting potential injuries
- Encourages employees to report MSDs and potential MSDs early. Early reporting, diagnosis, and interventions can limit injury severity, improve effectiveness of treatment, minimize the likelihood of permanent damage, and reduce the number of claims.
- Provides prompt medical evaluation, medical care, and follow-up care (including rehabilitation services when available)
- Provides guidance on job modifications, restrictions, or alternative jobs for injured employees.

Work accommodations and alternative duty tasks will help employees recover faster, so that they can return to their usual job without restrictions and risk of re-injury. Health care providers of maritime companies, who remain knowledgeable about operations and work practices by conducting periodic, systematic workplace walkthroughs to observe workplace conditions and processes, can effectively identify potential alternative duty jobs and maintain close contact with the employees.

Evaluating Progress. Procedures and mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the ergonomics process are also important. Evaluation and follow-up are essential to continuous improvement and long-term success. Ergonomics processes should be regularly evaluated to determine whether ergonomic objectives are met, including after new solutions are implemented. Such evaluations should include input from vessel/installation managers, health care providers, and employees to review goals, suggest changes in the process, and evaluate the effectiveness of ergonomic improvements.

The success of an ergonomics process can be evaluated based on interaction with employees and observations of the work environment, which are likely to be sufficient for small shipyards. Evaluation of more formal processes in larger organizations can also include activity and outcome measures used as indicators of process performance. Process evaluations may include the following:

- Direct communication with employees during training sessions, interviews during workplace observations, and follow-up medical evaluations
- Evaluation of each element of the ergonomics process, as determined by activity measures such as:
 - Average time between employee report of injury, risk factors or other ergonomics-related problem and implementation of appropriate solutions
 - Number of jobs analyzed and number of hazards identified
 - Number of employees trained
 - Number of risk factors reduced or eliminated
- Evaluation of the success in eliminating or reducing exposure to the ergonomic risks factors as determined by outcome measures that may include: