



Ergonomics Program



1.0 Purpose

- 1.** To implement policies and procedures for the protection of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) employees from Ergonomic risk factors.
- 2.** To establish and maintain a comprehensive university Ergonomics Program which provides ECU employees with the following services:
 - Education and training on the benefits behind the science of Ergonomics, and how to adjust the job to the individual, rather than the individual to the job.
 - Instilling the knowledge and awareness on how to detect acute and/or chronic musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), or Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CTDs). Correct behaviors that could be attributing to MSDs or CTDs and implement preventative measures by identifying and analyzing risk factors.
 - Informing employees of their rights and responsibilities to report any unsafe or hazardous working conditions that may lead to injury or illness. Employees will have the autonomy to conduct self-assessments or reach out to an Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Specialist to conduct an assessment.

2.0 Scope and Application

The Ergonomics Program will include all ECU employees whose daily job duties make them susceptible to Ergonomic risk factors. The design of this program is to coordinate the efforts of ECU supervisors, managers, employees, and the Environmental Health and Safety Department to prevent occupational MSDs which encompass a broader range of potential injuries and eliminate or reduce the prevalence of Ergonomic risk factors.

The primary tools EH&S intends to administer to make for a more streamlined and efficient Ergonomics Program for ECU employees will include:

- Training supervisors (including Deans, Directors, Department heads), staff, faculty, on how to properly report ergonomic risk factors regarding their daily workflow or office supplies and equipment. Training will also include how to evaluate and address early signs and symptoms of MSDs.
- Providing self-evaluation templates for employees to have the autonomy to self-assess their workstations and workflows for potential Ergonomic risk factors.
- Conducting workplace Ergonomic risk assessments based on anticipated or reported Ergonomics issues.

- Consulting with employees and supervisors on engineering and administrative controls regarding Ergonomic and job hazard analyses.
- Educating about the potential effects of Ergonomic risk exposures, including MSDs.
- Communicating with supervisors and employees on Ergonomic solution alternatives.
- Providing informational sheets that outline common Ergonomic risk factors such as repetitive movements, forceful exertion, contact stress, awkward postures, and vibration. Informational sheets will also include tips for proper posture and demonstrate an Ergonomically ideal work environment to prevent MSDs.

This Ergonomic Program will address all areas on campus. Including:

- Office spaces
- Shops
- Laboratories
- Classrooms
- Student centers (such as libraries, study lounges, etc.)

Each functional sector of campus will share the same desired goal of systematically identifying Ergonomic risks specific to their operations and prioritizing solutions to reduce employee risk exposures.

The goal of ECU's Ergonomics Program is to educate and empower employees to invest in their overall well-being at their workplace, to be able to understand the importance of an Ergonomically sound work environment, and to recognize signs and symptoms of MSDs. Through this Ergonomics Program, we aim to prevent the occurrence of MSDs by intervening with administrative and engineering controls and eliminating risk factors that cause MSDs. We strive to continuously improve this program in hopes to make a more streamlined and efficient way to serve our employees. EH&S believes in aiding the mission of making ECU a safe and healthy work environment and putting the employees' wellbeing first.

3.0 Definitions

- **Administrative Controls** – Changes in work procedures to reduce the duration, frequency, and severity of exposure to hazardous chemicals or situations. Administrative controls include work practice controls which are intended to reduce the likelihood of exposure by changing the way a task is performed. Some examples include training and education, job rotation, adjusting work schedules, task variation, and taking short breaks.

- **Engineering Controls** – Physical changes made to equipment or processes to reduce or eliminate the risk of injury to workers. Some examples include adjustable office equipment (such as tables, chairs, monitors, tools), implementing more Ergonomically efficient office supplies, and modifying workstations.
- **Ergonomics** – The scientific study of people’s efficiency in their working environment. OSHA describes Ergonomics as “the process of designing jobs to fit the worker.”
- **Ergonomic Hazards** – Physical factors in the workplace that can harm the musculoskeletal system. Ergonomic hazards in the workplace include, but are not limited to, poor posture, awkward movements, lifting heavy loads, repetitive tasks, poorly adjusted workstations, extreme temperatures, inadequate lighting, noise, work stress, and stationary positioning.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders** – Conditions that affect the muscles, bones, joints, tendons, ligaments, and cartilage. Some examples include carpal tunnel syndrome, rotator cuff tears, low back pain, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and fibromyalgia.

4.0 Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S)

EH&S is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of the Ergonomics Program. These responsibilities will include:

- Consistently reviewing, maintaining, and updating the Ergonomics Program.
- Providing feedback to any employee’s questions or concerns.
- Conducting on-site Ergonomic assessments.
- Educating supervisors, employees, and other personnel on the importance of Ergonomics, and how Ergonomic risk factors have a direct correlation to physical harm, quality of life, and decreased work efficiency.
- Training supervisors, employees, and other personnel on the detection of MSDS signs and symptoms, how to report for an assessment to be conducted, and tips for fitting a workstation to the employee.
- Performing ergonomic risk factor measurements, assessments and communicating results to supervisors (including Deans, Directors, Department heads) and employees.
- Maintaining up-to-date record logs of all trainings, assessments, and success stories from assessed employees.
- Conducting a job hazard analysis and control process that identifies, analyzes, and uses feasible engineering, work practice, controls to eliminate MSDs hazards that reduce MSDs hazards to the extent feasible.

- Establishing ways to evaluate controls to assure that they are effective. This could be in the form of annual surveys to employees previously assessed by EH&S to obtain feedback.

Supervisors

Supervisors (including Deans, Directors, and Department heads) play an integral role in supporting, promoting, and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. It is imperative that supervisors invest in their employees' overall health and well-being by adhering to programs such as these. Supervisory responsibilities related to the Ergonomics Program are to:

- Have Ergonomic training participation become a mandated procedure, especially for roles where Ergonomic hazards are prevalent. This should be when a new employee is hired during the on-boarding process, annually for preexisting employees, or to specific employees when the supervisor feels necessary.
- Remind employees of their personal duties, rights, and responsibilities to report early signs and symptoms of MSDs or concerns.
- Ensure each employee has access to EH&S contact information and website link.
- Work alongside EH&S through Ergonomic assessments to determine equipment needs when necessary to reduce Ergonomic risk factors.
- Support the Ergonomics Program through budgeting (i.e. setting aside allowances for the purchase of new Ergonomic equipment for faculty and staff with Ergonomic needs. In addition to following Human Resources and Procurement procedures for equipment purchase.

Employees

As the population most directly affected by MSDs and Ergonomic hazards during a workday, employees are to:

- Report early signs and symptoms of MSDs to either their supervisor, or to EH&S.
- Follow work practice procedures related to their jobs that are intended to reduce Ergonomic risk factors.
- Request work accommodations from their supervisor until the issue is remedied.
- Actively participate in the recognition, analysis, and abatement of Ergonomic risks.
- Be self-aware of their daily workflow regarding Ergonomic risk factors, conduct self-assessments of workstations, and/or request an EH&S Specialist to conduct an on-site assessment.
- Ensure that all mandatory training is taken in sufficient time and utilize the knowledge and understanding in daily tasks.

5.0 Ergonomic Assessment

Self-Assessment

EH&S has created a self-Ergonomic assessment that can be completed by any employee at any time. The self-Ergonomic assessment consists of an Office Ergonomic Checklist, as well as a Discomfort Survey. Although the assessment is primarily for office settings, departments such as Facilities Management can utilize the Discomfort Survey, as well as request an on-site assessment to be conducted by an EH&S Specialist. The assessment is in the form of a checklist, giving employees the option to answer “yes,” “no,” or “N/A” to various questions regarding their workstation (chair, keyboard, mouse, work surface, breaks, and accessories). The survey contains open-ended questions where employees write in answers regarding their current physical discomfort. The survey also has a section that contains a rating scale, where employees rate their current physical discomfort for particular body parts (neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, back, knees, and legs). These self-Ergonomic assessments can be sent to an EH&S Specialist for evaluation and follow-up.

EH&S Ergonomic Assessment

Employees can request an assessment through EH&S’s website under the Ergonomics section ([Ergonomics | Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky](#)). Employees will click the link titled “Request Ergonomics Assessment” and complete the submission. The form will ask for:

- First Name
- Last Name
- ECU Email
- ECU Phone Number
- ECU ID Number
- Job Title
- Department

Once the form is properly submitted, it will be sent directly to EH&S. When received, EH&S will respond to request and set up a meeting date/time to observe the location(s) of concern. If the problem location is on campus, EH&S will come to the location and perform their assessment. If the location is remote, EH&S will perform their assessment via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or any other video chat mechanism.

6.0 Employee Training

All ECU employees will receive General Office Ergonomics Training through either Vector training software, in-person training (contact EHS) or via the training video provided on [\(Ergonomics I Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky\)](#). If you decide to use training video please contact EHS with date and time you watch video for individual training documentation purposes. For group usage of video please utilize a sign-in-sheet documenting the training and send it to EHS. The goal(s) of this training will be educating employees to recognize workplace MSDs and Ergonomic Hazards.

These are the elements taught to all employees:

- How to implement Ergonomic principles in office settings in order to minimize or eliminate potential hazards.
- Identify and prevent Ergonomic risk factors at office workstations and differentiate between the correct and incorrect methods to lift safely.
- Identify common Ergonomic risk factors and injuries.
- Identify good Ergonomic practices.
- Identify safe lifting procedures.
- The general understanding and purpose of Ergonomics.
- The general understanding of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and how to detect signs and symptoms.
- The importance of self-Ergonomic assessments when setting up your workstation (remotely or on campus).
- How to report an Ergonomic concern and request an assessment from EH&S.