

CCS Administrative Procedure

2.30.05-X Office Ergonomics Assessment

Implementing Board Policy [2.30.05](#)

Contact: Environmental Health & Safety, (509) 533-8686 & (509) 533-8850

1.0 Purpose

Community Colleges of Spokane is committed to the health and safety of its faculty and staff and maintaining a safe and efficient workplace that complies with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations, programmatic standards, and with any special safety concerns identified at the unit level. Community Colleges of Spokane follows [WAC 296-800-110](#), enforced by Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), to protect employees against recognized hazards and to ensure they are provided with a safe and healthful work environment.

The purpose of this ergonomics assessment procedure is to apply ergonomic principles to the workplace in an effort to reduce or eliminate the number and severity of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.
- 2.2 Awkward Posture: Deviation from the neutral positions of the different body parts. Awkward postures typically include reaching above or behind, twisting, forward or backward bending, squatting and kneeling.
- 2.3 Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: Inflammation due to high compression of the median nerve as it passes through the carpal tunnel in the heel of the hand.
- 2.4 Contact Stress: Compression of soft body tissues against a hard or sharp surface/edge from a workstation or a hand tool (e.g., leaning forearms against the sharp edge of a desk/table).
- 2.5 Ergonomics: The science and practice of designing jobs or workplaces to match the capabilities and limitations of the human body.
- 2.6 Fatigue: A condition that results when the body cannot provide enough energy for the muscles to perform a task.
- 2.7 Force: The amount of muscular effort required to perform a task. Generally, the greater the force, the greater the degree of risk.
- 2.8 Health Care Provider (HCP): A physician specializing in occupational medicine, or a registered nurse specializing in occupational health, or other health personnel (such as emergency medical technicians) working under the supervision of a physician or registered nurse.
- 2.9 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA): Enacted in 1996, is designed to protect health insurance coverage when workers change jobs. It also set rules to protect the privacy of medical information.
- 2.10 Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD): Illness or injury that affect one or more parts of the musculoskeletal system.
- 2.11 Musculoskeletal System: The soft tissue and bones in the body. The parts of the musculoskeletal system are bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, nerves and blood vessels.

- 2.12 Neutral Posture: Recommended working posture in which joint angles do not contribute to excessive stress on the body.
- 2.13 Office Ergonomics: The branch of ergonomics dealing specifically with the office environment.
- 2.14 Posture: The general position of the whole body (e.g. standing, sitting, and kneeling) or, more specifically, the position of any body part/joint with respect to adjacent body parts or the joint's full range of motion.
- 2.15 Repetition: Performing the same motions over and over for long periods of each day. It includes daily and lengthy use of a keyboard or mouse.
- 2.16 Risk Factors: An aspect of a job that increases an employee's chance of developing a work-related musculoskeletal disorder. Risk factors include: awkward postures; high hand force; highly repetitive motions; repeated impact of the hand or knee; heavy, frequent or awkward lifting; and moderate to high hand-arm vibration.
- 2.17 Workstation: The area where an employee completes tasks or jobs. This can be an office, a desk, or other workspace. More than one type of work may occur at a single workstation.

3.0 Requesting an Ergonomic Assessment

Either an employee or an employee's supervisor may request an ergonomic evaluation of their office environment. However, when an ergonomic assessment is requested by the employee, they must route the request through their supervisor, who will submit the request to the Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) Office. The District Safety Officer will inquire about the primary reason an ergonomic assessment was requested (e.g. a medical concern) to determine if additional information or documentation is needed. Depending on the circumstances, the District Safety Officer may request assistance from the CCS Human Resources Office.

In general, employees may request an ergonomic assessment because of:

- Employee's concern about their workstation set-up/arrangement; and/or
- Employee's concern with symptoms associated with MSDs or discomfort.

4.0 Requesting Procedure

- 4.1 Employees should contact their supervisor to request an ergonomics assessment in writing.
- 4.2 Supervisors should contact the EH&S Office in writing upon receipt of a request for an ergonomic assessment.
- 4.3 Employees who are at high risk for an ergonomic injury (e.g., those with a medical recommendation or ADA concern) will receive priority in scheduling.

5.0 Workstation Evaluations

- 5.1 Upon request of an ergonomic assessment, the Safety Officer/ergonomics consultant will schedule a meeting with the employee to conduct the ergonomic assessment or consultation as needed.

- 5.2 Workstation ergonomic assessments may include:
- Interview with employee;
 - Observation of essential job tasks;
 - Measurements like desk height, depth, and width;
 - Photo documentation if applicable;
 - Identification of risk factors by using the Office Ergonomic Assessment Form; and/or
 - Onsite workstation adjustments to existing equipment and/or employee work processes.
- 5.3 Written documentation will be provided to the employee and their supervisor with recommendations to reduce/eliminate ergonomic risk factors within two weeks of the assessment.
- 5.4 In accordance with the ergonomics assessment results, the department may:
- 5.4.1 Evaluate providing recommended office furnishings or equipment, and/or
 - 5.4.2 Evaluate submitting a Building Improvement Request (BIR) to the Facilities Department, for remodel of an employee's office environment (e.g., workstation layout; adjustability of work surface).
- 5.5 If the department elects to purchase the recommended furniture or equipment, supervisors should follow existing procurement procedures.
- 5.6 The supervisor and employee implement the recommendations, and the supervisor and ergonomics consultant provide follow-up with the employee as needed.
- 5.7 The employee's direct supervisor will be responsible for implementing the recommended corrective actions.
- 5.8 The employee will be responsible for using equipment correctly and performing tasks as outlined in the corrective action plan. Questions regarding the plan may be directed to the Safety Officer.

6.0 Purchasing New Ergonomic Equipment

The employee's department is responsible for providing and/or purchasing ergonomic equipment for employees. To purchase ergonomic equipment, including ergonomic chairs and desks, employees are required to follow CCS purchasing procedures. See [CCS Administrative Procedure 5.30.05-J](#) for additional information. To purchase computer accessories, software, and hardware, including ergonomic keyboards, mouse, etc., please contact the IT Department.

Please refer to the [OSHA Purchasing Guide Checklist](#) for guidance on how to select safe and comfortable equipment for your workstation.

7.0 Musculoskeletal Disorders Report

- 7.1 Employees who experience discomfort or symptoms associated with work-related MSDs should immediately report the discomfort, verbally and/or in writing, directly to their supervisor.
- 7.2 An [Accident Report Form](#) must be completed by either the affected person, a witness to the incident, or the supervisor.

8.0 Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Covered Under The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

Please refer to [CCS 2.30.01 – B Reasonable Accommodation and Return to Work Procedure](#).

9.0 Ergonomic Work Practices

Work practices and operating procedures can be used to reduce the duration, frequency, or severity of an employee's exposure to ergonomic risk factors. The following items should be considered.

9.1 Training:

9.1.1 The EH&S Office will provide ergonomics training to employees upon request.

9.1.2 WA L&I Office Ergonomics Web Course is also available at [L&I Computer Workstation & Mobile Computing](#).

9.1.3 One-on-one training and discussion may occur when the EH&S Officer/ergonomics consultant conducts an office environment assessment, based on an employee/supervisor request. Written training materials may also be provided.

9.2 Job design: Refers to alternate tasks and short breaks/recovery pauses to provide relief from:

- Repetitive motions
- Static and awkward postures
- Excessive forceful exertions
- Contact stress
- Vibration
- Muscular fatigue

Employees can use recovery pauses or short breaks (3 to 5 minutes) to perform other activities at most every hour to help prevent discomfort of prolonged computer use. Repetitious static work such as working at the computer for a long period of time is very fatiguing on the body as well as the eyes. It is important that employees take breaks from computer work so the body can rest and recover.

9.3 Stretching and exercise can help ease the discomfort and harmful effects of repetitive motions and awkward or static postures. These also can be useful in increasing body movement and blood circulation while addressing muscle imbalances that can occur, but it is important that they are well designed. Employees should ask their healthcare provider for proper stretching and exercise guidelines.

10.0 Recordkeeping

10.1 Training sessions will be documented with employee sign-in sheets, date of training, and the training session agenda.

10.2 Copies of all physician's notes, ergonomic assessments forms, and reports will be maintained at both EH&S and Human Resources Offices.

Note: Community Colleges of Spokane will ensure the confidentiality and security of employee's medical and health information under the ADA, the common law right to

privacy, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance as they apply to CCS.

11.0 Non-Office Ergonomics Assessment

For non-office assessment, the employee and supervisor will work together to identify and minimize hazards. The EH&S Officer/ergonomic consultant can be contacted for assistance and workplace evaluation.

12.0 Related Information

12.1 [OSHA Purchasing Guide Checklist for Ergonomic Equipment](#)

12.2 [Computer Workstations Self-Evaluation Checklist](#)

12.3 [OSHA Computer Workstations eTool](#)

12.4 [L&I Computer Workstation & Mobile Computing Course](#)

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