

MOL will be focusing on MSDs in February 2012

MSDs are injuries of the muscles, nerves and tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs. They can be caused by forceful exertion, awkward body positions, hand-arm and whole body vibration, contact stress, and repetitive tasks. MSDs often take time to develop and can lead to chronic back pain, shoulder problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, etc. Workers with these kinds of injuries may have to take a couple of days off work, or they may end up with a long term disability.



Although musculoskeletal injuries have become less frequent across Ontario, they are still happening in several sectors. In 2009, MSDs accounted for 900,000 days lost and more than 28,000 Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims worth over \$111 million. Not only do these injuries cost all of us money in the long run, but they cost workers lot of pain and suffering.

So...Where do we start?

To reduce musculoskeletal injuries at your workplace, you need to recognize, assess and control the hazards. You will need to incorporate the proper procedures and best practices to control the MSDs in your company's health and safety program. These controls should be workplace specific to the type of work that your workers do. In general they can include the following:

- Use material handling equipment such as forklifts, carts, dollies and pallet jacks to move material around rather than having workers carry them.
- Avoid lifting a load from the floor by storing those objects in such a way that will minimize the times that workers have to bend down to pick up a load.
- Working on the floor usually requires kneeling and bending your back forward. When possible, raise the work height by using a work bench.
- Minimize work above the shoulder. Muscles in your shoulders and arms fatigue more quickly than those in your back and legs.
- Make more trips with lighter loads. Move smaller weights more frequently but less stress on your back than moving larger loads.
- Implement an exercise program. It can help prevent MSDs and promote general good health.

For more information about MSDs you can contact our office and we would be pleased to discuss your needs.