

A GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING AND PREVENTING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

Safe work guidelines

The following guide is intended to encourage safe work practices while on assignment at a customer site by assisting you to recognize and prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders. It also supports our safety commitment to all employees as outlined in our Kelly Health & Safety Policy.

What are Musculoskeletal Disorders?

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) are injuries affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves. They are sometimes called:

- repetitive strain injury (RSI)
- cumulative trauma disorder (CTD)
- work-related musculoskeletal disorder (WMSD)
- musculoskeletal injury (MSI, MSK)
- occupational overuse syndrome (OOS)
- sprain and strain.

MSDs develop due to the effects of repetitive, forceful or awkward movements on joints, ligaments and other soft tissues. Some MSD injuries include:

- Low Back Strain
- Neck Strain
- Tendonitis
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)
- Rotator Cuff Syndrome
- Tennis Elbow (Epicondylitis)

Many body parts can be affected by MSDs. The back is the most common, but the shoulders, neck, elbows, hands and wrists are also frequently involved. MSD-related pain and discomfort have also been reported in the hips, knees, legs and feet.

A number of medical diagnoses are covered by the term MSD, including:

- back pain (many specific diagnoses)
- carpal tunnel syndrome (wrist/hand)
- epicondylitis (tennis or golfer's elbow)
- muscle strain
- rotator cuff disorder or syndrome (shoulder)
- tension neck syndrome
- tendonitis (anywhere in the body), and
- tenosynovitis (anywhere in the body)

While different body parts can be affected by these disorders, the symptoms of MSDs are similar no matter where they occur. The symptoms generally include:

- pain with or without movement
- swelling and tenderness
- reduced range of motion and/or stiffness, and
- tingling and/or numbness in nerve-related injuries or disorders.

FORCE



Force is the amount of effort exerted by your muscles and the amount of pressure on body parts as a result of different job demands. All work tasks require the worker to exert some force. However, when a task requires a level of force that is too high for any particular muscle, it can damage the muscle or the related tendons, joints and other soft tissues.

You have to consider how much force is being exerted or how much weight is being handled. In addition, think about:

- how long you need to keep exerting it
- how many times you need to exert it in a given period, and
- the posture you are in when exerting the force

Activities that often involve high force requirements include:

- lifting, lowering and carrying
- pushing or pulling, and
- gripping and manipulating objects

FIXED OR AWKWARD POSTURES



Posture is another name for the position of various parts of the body during any activity. For most joints, a good or “neutral” posture means that the joints are being used near the middle of their full range of motion.

The farther a joint moves towards either end of its range of motion, or the farther away from the neutral posture, the more awkward or poor the posture becomes and the more strain is put on the muscles, tendons and ligaments around the joint.

For example,

- when arms are fully stretched out, the elbow and shoulder joints are at the end of their range of motion. If the worker pulls or lifts repeatedly in this position, there is a higher risk of injury.

REPETITION



The risk of developing an MSD increases when you use the same muscles, tendons, joints, etc. repeatedly, with few breaks or chances for rest. Highly repetitive tasks can cause muscle fatigue, damage to other tissues, and, eventually, pain and discomfort. This can occur even if the level of force exerted is low and the work postures are satisfactory.

The MSD risk increases if the repetitive action also requires high force and/or an awkward posture.

In addition, don't forget: doing any task for too long without taking a break can also lead to pain and discomfort.

OTHER MSD HAZARDS AND WORKPLACE FACTORS



Other MSD hazards and workplace factors that should be considered include:

- contact stress,
- local or hand/arm vibration
- whole body vibration
- cold temperatures
- hot work environments
- repeated impacts
- work organization, and work methods

What can you do?

Make sure you've been trained to do your job safely and to know the hazards or factors in your job that could cause MSD. Take steps to control or eliminate MSD hazards and participate in making your workplace safer.

- Report MSD hazards and concerns to your supervisor and your Kelly representative
- Use the equipment and tools provided to reduce exposure to MSD hazards
- Know how to make adjustments to the workstation and make them suit you and the work you do
- Take rest breaks from repetitive or forceful tasks
- Move around and occasionally change positions
- Go to your supervisor with questions, concerns or for additional training
- Offer suggestions to improve working conditions to your supervisor and your Kelly Representative
- Be aware of the symptoms of MSD and if you have any, report them to your supervisor and your Kelly Representative

Ask yourself these questions:

Use this checklist to help identify tasks and equipment that can increase your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD).

- ✓ I have to lift, lower or carry objects that are, in my opinion, heavy
- ✓ I have to do difficult pushing or pulling
- ✓ I do tasks that require difficult and forceful gripping with the hands
- ✓ I use tools that require a great deal of effort to hold, control or use
- ✓ I use my hands to pound or hammer things when doing my job
- ✓ I do other high force tasks in my job that are not covered above
- ✓ I work with my hands above my shoulders or held far away from my body
- ✓ I do tasks with one or both arms behind my body
- ✓ I bend or twist my back / trunk
- ✓ I twist or bend (forward/back/to the side) my neck
- ✓ I hold my neck one side (e.g. holding phone between the ear and shoulder)
- ✓ I need to bend or twist my wrist

- ✓ I pick up or hold things using difficult grips
- ✓ I need to use other awkward postures that are not covered above
- ✓ I have to lift, lower or carry objects repeatedly when doing my job
- ✓ I repeatedly push or pull things when doing my job
- ✓ I repeatedly grip or manipulate things with my hands/fingers
- ✓ I repeatedly use awkward arm, hand or wrist postures
- ✓ I repeatedly use awkward back or neck postures
- ✓ I repeatedly use poorly designed hand tools when doing my job
- ✓ I repeatedly do tasks or use awkward postures that are not covered above
- ✓ I use hand tools that vibrate and/or am exposed to whole body vibration
- ✓ I don't have enough space / clearance at my workstation / work area
- ✓ I have to stay in awkward postures for a long time without a change
- ✓ I sit or stand for long periods of time without a change in posture
- ✓ I don't feel as if I have enough variety in my job
- ✓ I find my job to be very demanding

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions, you may be exposed to MSD hazards. Speak to your Kelly Representative about your concerns. Work together to find ways to reduce your exposure to MSD hazards by changing the way the job is done or the design of the task/work area.

What Kelly Services does for you

At Kelly Services, we are concerned for your health and safety. Prior to you starting any assignment, Kelly performs a risk assessment to ensure the assignment you will be going to is safe and meets Kelly's expectations of safety.

Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*

The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires employers to:

- ensure that workers are made aware of the hazards associated with their jobs and workplaces
- implement controls to reduce the risk of injury due to these hazards, and
- take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect a worker.

MSD hazards must be treated the same as any other workplace hazard. This means that they need to be:

- recognized and identified
- assessed, and
- controlled.

All parties in a workplace have a role to play in preventing MSDs in the workplace.