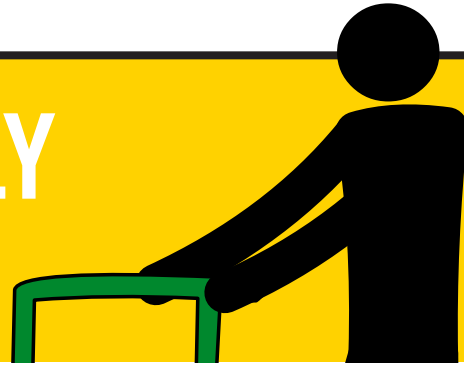


WORKING SAFELY BY DESIGN



BACKGROUND NOTES

Most workplace injuries in Nova Scotia affect our musculoskeletal system. The bad news is that these musculoskeletal injuries (MSI), also known as soft tissue injuries, cost millions of dollars every year in Nova Scotia. The good news is that musculoskeletal injuries can typically be prevented by changing the way work areas are designed, and how tasks are carried out.

As you watch this video, consider how employers and employees can work together to examine and improve how jobs are done. Does the workplace have processes and an environment that allows tasks to be performed without strain? Can an ergonomic assessment be done of work areas in your business?

QUESTION & DISCUSSION POINTS

What types of actions and tasks are common in our work?

Examples:

- Lifting
- Bending and moving
- Working on production lines
- Sitting or standing for long periods
- Using hand tools or machines
- Moving patients
- List group's examples:

What kinds of hazard controls do we currently have in place to decrease the risk from these tasks?

- Proper work process
- Safe work design and procedures
- Appropriate tools
- Training
- Protective equipment
- List group's examples

See "Spot it. Fix it." at worksafeforlife.ca to learn more

What other measures could be used to further decrease risk for injury? Examples:

- Always assess the task for risk of injury
- Look for new tools and new ways of doing it
- Plan stretching and rest breaks
- List group’s examples

Do we pull heavy loads often in our workplace?

Examples:

- Full pallets of materials
- Transferring patients
- Pulling wet laundry from a washer
- Dragging cases of stock in a store
- List group examples

Lifting and Storage: Questions and Discussion Points

Obviously anvils aren't an everyday workplace item, but other heavy things are. How people lift them, or are asked to lift them, can lead to injury. Storing heavy items at waist height is safer for lifting and reduces overhead hazards.

- How are things stored in our workplace?
- How do we access those items?
- Does this need to change?

What are some of Rod's key tips on lifting?

- Don't twist – “Keep your nose between your toes”
- Don't lift things that are too heavy
- Lift with your knees, not your back
- Use proper tools to safely lift and move objects

Where does lifting happen in our workplace? Examples:

- Are people lifting large or heavy loads?
- Are people lifting anything (even smaller and lighter materials) repeatedly?
- What kind of safe lifting or safe handling training have you received?
- Do we have a safe lifting program? If so, is it appropriate to our needs? If not, how does it need to improve?

What's better – pushing or pulling?

- Pushing. Our muscles are better designed for it.

How can we prevent injury due to these hazards?

Examples:

- Evaluate how the task needs to be changed.
- Design new safe work procedure, and/or work area design for that task
- Ensure proper training for the work task
- Use proper training every time a lift is required.
- Use proper tools and work measures, like carts, adjustable tables, lift devices, or safe lift teams in order to safely move items or people.
- List group examples

CONCLUSION

- Many musculoskeletal injuries can be prevented by changing the way work areas are designed and how work tasks are carried out.
- Employers and workers need to work together to identify safe work design and procedure for tasks that require high frequency, high repetition, high force.
- The “Spot it. Fix it.” sprains and strain activity found at worksaferforlife.ca is another good example of a way to start thinking about safe work design. You can also download the “Sprains and Strains” brochure, which includes the “Spot it. Fix it.” poster, or you can request a hard copy.
- If you see a hazard in your workplace, be sure to report it to your supervisor – all hazards must be investigated.

Rod is a great way to begin the conversation about workplace safety. But he’s just the start to a safer workplace. If you see a hazard in your workplace, be sure to report it to your supervisor – all hazards must be investigated.

WCB of Nova Scotia: 1-800-870-3331
NS OHS Division: 1-800-952-2687 or 1-902-424-5400
To learn more, visit worksaferforlife.ca and someways.ca

