

# MAY

## SAFETY TALK

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation defines musculoskeletal injury (MSI) as an injury or disorder of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue including a sprain, strain and inflammation, that may be caused or aggravated by work. MSI's are the number one injury suffered by municipal staff, particularly in Public Works.



Employers must assess the risk of MSI's in the workplace, as with all other hazards.

**The physical risk factors for MSI are the demands of a task, including force, repetition, work posture, and local contact stress.**

When combined with the element of exposure – how great the force is, how long the worker is performing the task, etc.,

## REDUCING MSI'S IN THE WORKPLACE

employers can effectively complete a risk assessment and establish controls to prevent injury.

There are seven steps recommended by WorkSafeBC in evaluating and controlling the risk of MSI's.

1. Consult with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee throughout the process.
2. Educate workers about the risk of MSI's and the signs and symptoms of injury.
3. Identify jobs with the risk of MSI, and identify risk factors within those jobs.
4. Assess the level of risk. Consult with affected workers and a representative sampling of other workers.
5. Implement controls to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury.
6. Train workers in how to follow the control measures.
7. Continually evaluate the control measures to ensure they are, and remain, effective in reducing the risk of injury.

Ideally, control measures will remove the risk of injury. If this is not possible, then steps must be taken to reduce the magnitude of exposure, through such steps as:

- Better designed tools
- Redesigned work stations
- Changes in processes such as requiring two people to lift a heavy object



Next, reduce the duration and frequency of exposure through work/rest cycles, rotating jobs, combining other tasks to reduce repetition.

**Organize the work so that physically demanding tasks are interspersed with less physically demanding tasks.**

The BC Municipal Safety Association offers the following courses:

- Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention (Industry/Field), and
- Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Reduction Strategies for Supervisors