

Workplace Health and Safety Inspection for Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) Hazards

It is important for the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) to include MSD prevention in its regular activities and inspections. One way this can be done is to look for and identify MSD hazards in the work being performed during workplace inspection walkthroughs. The JHSC should discuss MSD prevention issues and make suggestions to the employer. The following are sample cues to use during a workplace inspection for identifying tasks where there may be increased MSD risk. There is also a sample checklist provided on page 2.

Force

Do workers:

- lift, lower or carry objects that are, in their opinion, heavy
- have difficulties pushing or pulling objects
- perform tasks that require difficult and forceful gripping with their hands
- use tools that require a great deal of effort to hold, control or use
- use their hands to pound or hammer things

Fixed or awkward postures

Do workers:

- work with their hands above their shoulders or held far away from the body
- do tasks with one or both arms behind the body
- bend or twist the back/trunk
- bend or twist the neck forward, back or to the side
- hold their neck to one side (e.g., holding phone between ear and shoulder)
- bend or twist the wrist
- pick up or hold things using difficult grips (pinch grips, wide-finger grips)
- have too little space or clearance in their work area
- stay in awkward postures for a long time without a change in posture
- sit or stand for long periods of time without a change in posture

Repetition

Do workers repeatedly:

- lift, lower or carry objects
- push or pull things when doing their job
- grip or manipulate things with their hands or fingers
- use awkward arm, hand or wrist postures
- use awkward back or neck postures
- use poorly designed hand tools
- do tasks or use awkward postures that are not covered above
- use hand tools that vibrate

Indicators of MSD-related problems

Do workers:

- make comments about the job being very demanding
- make their own modifications to tools or workstations
- wear splints or supports
- massage muscles or joints or shake their limbs because of discomfort
- avoid certain tasks or jobs because of task-related discomfort or pain
- make comments about discomfort or fatigue

Content sourced from the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario (2007) Part 3B: MSD Prevention Toolbox



For more info visit:
msdprevention.com

RESEARCH MEETING PRACTICE TO PREVENT MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSD)
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Centre of Research Expertise
for the Prevention of
Musculoskeletal Disorders

**Work
shouldn't
hurt**

Workplace Health and Safety Inspection for MSD Hazards Checklist

Use this checklist to look for clues that can help identify potential MSD hazards and the tasks associated with the MSD hazard in the workplace. Incorporate this checklist into monthly JHSC inspections and safety walks. During inspection and walkthroughs, observe workers as they perform their tasks and speak to workers about their MSD related concerns. Use the examples within the checklist to start a conversation with workers to help identify potential MSD hazards and bring findings back to the JHSC for further discussion.

MSD Hazard	Do workers:	Check if 'Yes'	Observed in What Task? (Name of Task)
Force	• lift, lower or carry objects that are, in their opinion, heavy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• have difficulties pushing or pulling objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• perform tasks that require difficult and forceful gripping with their hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• use tools that require a great deal of effort to hold, control or use	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• use their hands to pound or hammer objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Posture	• work with their hands above their shoulders or held far away from the body	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• do tasks with one or both arms behind the body	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• bend or twist the back/trunk	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• bend or twist the neck forward, back or to the side	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• hold their neck to one side (e.g., holding phone between ear and shoulder)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• bend or twist the wrist	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• pick up or hold things using difficult grips (pinch grips, wide-finger grips)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• have too little space or clearance in their work area	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• stay in awkward postures for a long time without a change in posture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• sit or stand for long periods of time without a change in posture	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Repetition	• repeatedly lift, lower or carry objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly push or pull things when doing their job	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly grip or manipulate things with their hands or fingers	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly use awkward arm, hand or wrist postures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly use awkward back or neck postures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly use poorly designed hand tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly do tasks or use awkward postures that are not covered above	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• repeatedly use hand tools that vibrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other MSD Indicators	• make comments about the job being very demanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• make their own modifications to tools or workstations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• wear splints or supports	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• massage muscles or joints or shake their limbs because of discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• avoid certain tasks or jobs because of task-related discomfort or pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	• make comments about discomfort or fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	