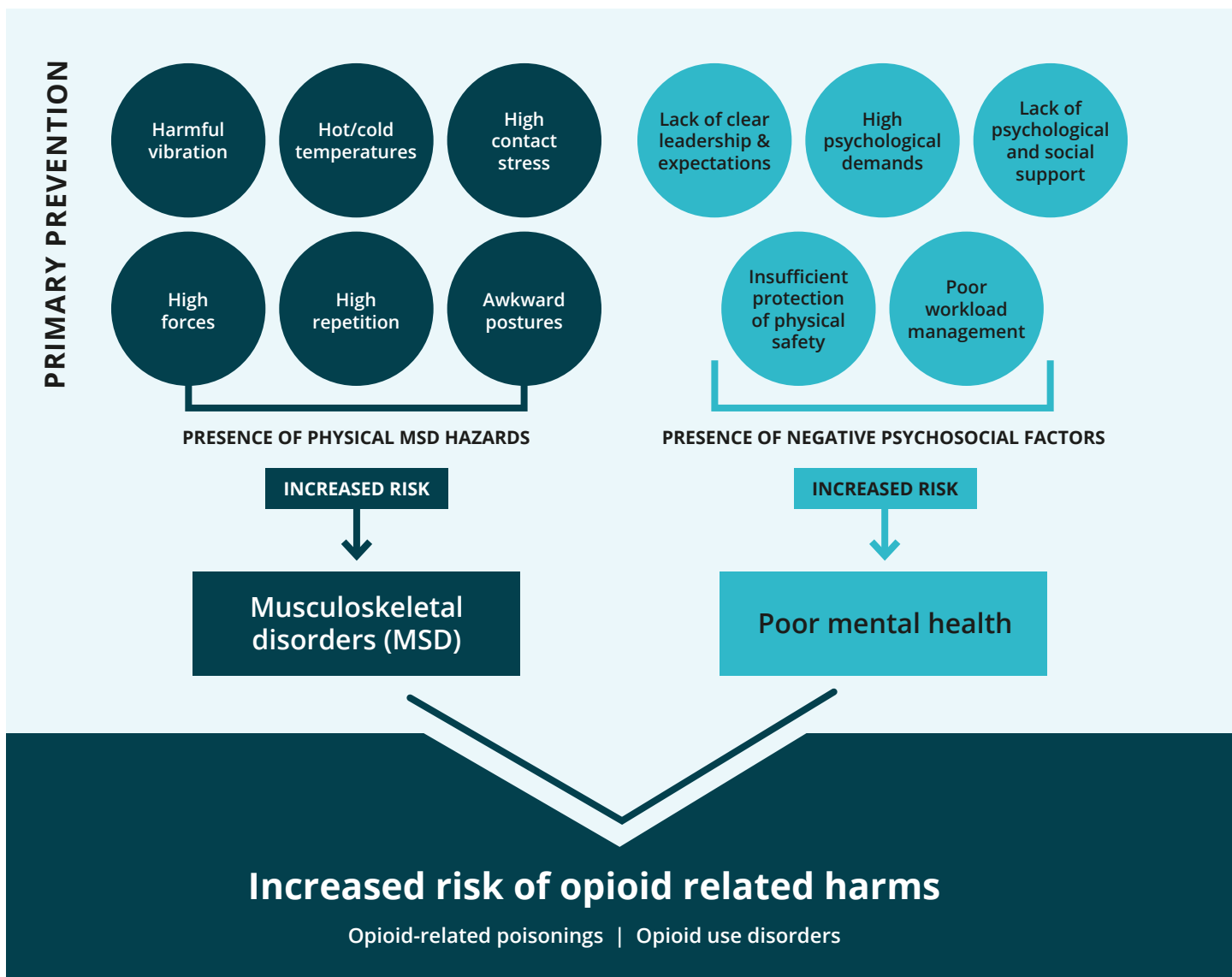


Preventing MSD to reduce opioid use

Workers with musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) are at higher risk of opioid use and subsequent risk of opioid related harms. In some cases, this could result in the use of opioids at work to return to work early or avoid taking time off, which can pose additional safety risks in the workplace (e.g., during motorized equipment use). Primary prevention of MSD and related hazards is recommended and includes the reduction of physical and psychosocial hazards in the workplace.



Why is MSD prevention key?

- It's the right thing to do
- MSD may result in the misuse of opioids to manage symptoms such as pain at work, leading to increased risk of opioid-related harms
- MSD can negatively impact workers mental and physical health
- Return on investment of MSD prevention
 - Both opioid use disorders and MSD are costly – by reducing MSD, you can reduce costs related to MSD and future risk of opioid use
 - Additional benefits of MSD prevention include increases in productivity, quality, and worker satisfaction

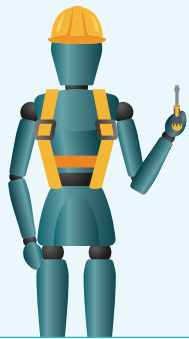


Preventing MSD to reduce opioid use

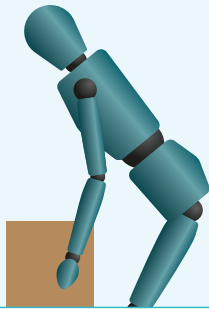
Which occupations are at highest risk of opioid-related harms in Ontario, among injured workers?

Almost all occupations were found to have elevated risk of opioid-related harms (except for teaching and related occupations) in injured workers compared to the general population. The occupations and activities at greatest risk included:

CONSTRUCTION TRADES



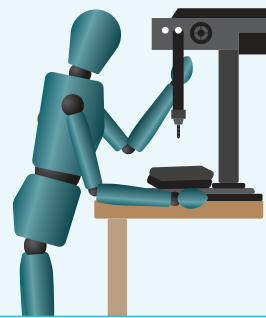
MANUAL MATERIALS HANDLING



PROCESSING (MINERAL, METAL, CHEMICAL)



MACHINING AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS



Note: Jobs with high physical demand generally had higher risk of opioid use in injured workers.

TRANSPORT

FORESTRY AND LOGGING

MEDICINE AND HEALTH

Additional job factors present in the workplace **may also increase the risk of opioid use**, including perceived financial or job insecurity, non-standard work arrangements (e.g., seasonal or contract work), workplace culture, and return to work recovery challenges.

Carnide et al., 2024.

What can you do to prevent MSD?

Workers – report discomfort early, and work with your supervisor to find solutions to remove MSD hazards.

Supervisors – ensure you know how to recognize MSD hazards in the workplace. Encourage workers to communicate feelings of discomfort using the discomfort survey, as this may indicate the start of an MSD.

Workers

Open communication and a positive workplace culture are key components of an effective MSD prevention program.

Supervisors

Managers and business owners

Managers and business owners

- 1 Implement an MSD prevention program using the Quick Start Guide General or Office, Basic, or Comprehensive Guidelines.
- 2 Use a participatory approach – encourage workers and supervisors to report early signs of MSD.
- 3 Use leading indicators (MSD hazards) as performance metrics.

SCAN HERE FOR OPIOID AND MSD PREVENTION RESOURCES



Mental Health and Psychosocial Hazards can interact with physical hazards to increase risk of MSD. Reduce psychosocial hazards to help reduce MSD and opioid use in the workplace using the [psychosocial hazards and MSD poster](#).

