Administrative Procedure

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Subject: ERGONOMICS PROGRAMS

1.0. PURPOSE:

To establish the procedure for applying ergonomic principles in the workplace in an effort to improve employee well-being through the reduction of workplace discomfort and the identification and control of ergonomic hazards that may result in personal occupational injuries or illnesses. An ergonomically sound work environment maximizes employee comfort while minimizing the risk of undue physical and mental stress. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can result when there is a mismatch between the physical capacity of workers and their equipment and the physical demands of their job. Ergonomics can provide a solution to many of these injuries.

2.0. ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:

All organizational units of the University, excluding Auxiliary organizations.

3.0. REFERENCES:

3.1. California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5110

3.2. California Labor Code, Sections 6400, 6401, and 6401.7

3.3. California Code of Regulations (CalOSHA), Subchapter 7, General Industry Safety Orders, Group 15, Article 106. Ergonomics, 5110, Repetitive Motion Injuries

3.4. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. 654.

4.0. POLICY:

It is the policy of the University to provide all employees with a safe and healthy workplace by taking the necessary steps to reduce the severity of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). This program is a collaborative effort that includes managers, faculty, administrators and staff. Furniture and equipment purchased to specifically address an individual employee's ergonomic needs shall be transferred with the employee in the event of transfer. Ergonomic studies should be permitted under these circumstances:

4.1. Reasonable Accommodation – when the Office for Equity and Diversity determines an ergonomic study is needed in order to help with a disability issue related to reasonable accommodation.

Approved: _____ **Date:** _____

4.2. Workers' Compensation – when the Workers' Compensation office determines that an ergonomic study is needed to help mitigate against a potential workers' compensation claim or an employee's doctor provides a recommendation.

4.3. Employee's Request – when an employee notifies his or her supervisor that an ergonomic study will help improve working conditions to alleviate pain, discomfort or an unsafe condition.

4.4. Supervisor's Request – when a supervisor feels that an employee's work station can be improved in order to improve working conditions to alleviate pain, discomfort or an unsafe condition.

5.0. DEFINITIONS:

5.1. Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs) - The term for health disorders arising from repeated biomechanical stress on the body due to ergonomic hazards. CTDs are disorders of the muscles, tendons, and/or nerves that develop from or are aggravated by exertions or movement of the body of a repetitious nature. CTDs are also referred to as repetitive motion injuries, repetitive strain injuries, repetitive trauma disorders, and overuse injuries.

5.2. Ergonomics - The scientific study of people at work. The goal of ergonomics is to reduce physical and mental stress and eliminate injuries and disorders associated with the overuse of muscles, poor posture and repeated tasks.

5.3. Ergonomic Hazards - Workplace conditions that pose a biomechanical stress to the worker. Such hazardous workplace conditions include, but are not limited to, faulty workstation layout, improper work methods, improper tools, and job design problems that include aspects of workflow, speed, posture, inadequate lighting, force requirements, and work/rest cycles. They are also referred to as "stressors."

5.4. Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) - Refers to conditions that involve the nerves, tendons, muscles, and supporting structures of the body.

5.5. Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI) - A disorder of the body's soft tissue components that affects eyes, ears, wrists, arms, hands, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles individually or all at once. This is a musculoskeletal and nervous system disorder caused by repeated and frequent twisting, bending, and sustained awkward positioning, over an extended period of time. These illnesses include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Back Disorders
b. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)
c. De Quervain's disease
d. Headaches associated with eye strain
e. Hearing Loss
f. Raynaud's Syndrome
g. Repetitive Motion Disorders
h. Tendonitis
i. Tenosynovitis
j. Trigger Finger
k. Environmental factors – cold or hot temperature extremes, lighting, noise

Tasks that contribute to RMI when accomplished over an extended period of time include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Word processing
b. Bending and lifting
c. Hand tools or equipment use
d. Pushing or pulling
e. Computer screen use
f. Poor work station design

5.6. Worksite evaluation - The breaking down of the complete working environment into components including personnel, workstation, workplace layout, equipment, supplies, and procedures for the purpose of identifying possible hazards and developing solutions for eliminating or controlling these hazards.

6.0. RESPONSIBILITIES:

6.1. Employees will:

6.1.1. Communicate ergonomic concerns to his/her supervisor. Employees may request a worksite evaluation by completing the Ergonomic/Worksite Evaluation Request form (Appendix 8.1.). If experiencing discomfort or pain that may be due to a repetitive motion injury, the evaluation should be requested as soon as possible.

6.1.2. Participate in the worksite evaluations.

6.1.3. Comply with ergonomic changes/recommendations.

6.1.4. Participate in training as provided.

6.2. Department Managers/Supervisors will:

6.2.1. Provide new and existing employees with a safe work environment.

6.2.2. Upon initial knowledge of a work-related cumulative trauma related disorder, initiate a workstation evaluation by contacting Risk Management & Environmental, Health & Safety (RM/EHS). Any recommendations from such an evaluation shall be implemented unless the employee can be accommodated otherwise.

6.2.3. Participate in worksite evaluations.

6.2.4. Order recommended equipment within thirty (30) days upon receipt of the ergonomic/worksite evaluation report from RM/EHS.

6.2.5. Ensure that ergonomic changes/recommendations are implemented and/or used appropriately.

6.3. Risk Management & Environmental, Health & Safety Office (RM/EHS) will:

6.3.1. Evaluate and monitor the ergonomic program including assessing the nature and extent of ergonomic hazards, recommending ways of minimizing or controlling these hazards.

6.3.2. Perform worksite evaluations of an employee's work area upon request and make recommendations for improvements and purchase of appropriate equipment.

6.3.3. Provide ergonomic training to employees and management on the proper work practices necessary to maintain a safe and healthful working environment.

6.3.4. Evaluate all requests for worksite evaluations.

6.3.5. Follow up with the departments regarding purchasing of equipment.

6.3.6. Ensure that workstations are properly set up and employees are trained to properly adjust their furniture and equipment.

6.4. Human Resources Management (HRM) will:

6.4.1. Upon receipt of medical documentation, contact RM/EHS to perform a worksite evaluation.

6.4.2. Upon receipt of the worksite evaluation report from RM/EHS, the Workers' Compensation unit or Office for Equity and Diversity will purchase the requested equipment as it relates to these areas.

6.4.3. Follow up with RM/EHS to ensure that the workstations are properly set up.

7.0. PROCEDURES:

7.1. Procurement and Contracts:

7.1.1. When developing plans or considering purchases that may not conform to University ergonomic standards, Procurement and Contracts will consult with the RM/EHS office.

8.0. APPENDICES:

8.1. Ergonomic/Worksite Evaluation Request.