

# ERGONOMICS: A STEP-BY-STEP PROGRAM DEVELOPER

## Why are work-related musculoskeletal disorders a problem?

There are many reasons for considering work-related MSDs a problem, including the following:

- They are among the most prevalent lost-time injuries and illnesses in almost every industry.
- MSDs, specifically those involving the back, are among the most costly occupational problems.
- Job activities that may cause musculoskeletal disorders span diverse workplaces and job operations.
- They may cause a great deal of pain and suffering among afflicted workers.
- Work-related MSDs may decrease productivity and the quality of products and services. Workers experiencing aches and pains on the job may not be able to do quality work.
- Because musculoskeletal disorders have been associated with non-work activities (e.g., sports) and medical conditions (e.g., renal disease, rheumatoid arthritis), it is difficult to determine the proportion due solely to occupation. For example, in the general population, nonoccupational causes of low back pain are probably more common than workplace causes. However, even in these cases, the musculoskeletal disorders may be aggravated by workplace factors.

## Musculoskeletal disorders: Employer and employee information

The following information may be used for employee MSD training. “Ergonomics: What employees need to know” covers basic information that employees need to know for the early identification of musculoskeletal disorders.

**Note:** You may reproduce this information to use during MSD training sessions.

Following “Ergonomics: What employees need to know,” you will find detailed information on common musculoskeletal disorders. The first part of every MSD topic provides in-depth information for the employer or trainer. The second part of the MSD topic is briefer and may be copied and used as an employee informational handout.

**Musculo-  
skeletal  
disorders:  
Employer  
and  
employee  
information**