



MSD Prevention Series for Ontario Questions and Answers

Information about Ontario's Musculoskeletal (MSD) prevention Initiative and the new downloadable resources available to assist people to address their concerns, including a new MSD Prevention Practices website and a new Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention Series:

- Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention Guideline,
- MSD Resource Manual
- The MSD Toolbox for Ontario

Q. What are musculoskeletal disorders?

A. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) is an umbrella term for a number of injuries and disorders of the muscles, bones, tendons, nerves, etc.

A worker's exposure to various risk factors in the workplace may result in the development of MSDs or aggravate a pre-existing condition.

Q. Why is the term 'musculoskeletal disorders' used?

A. The term musculoskeletal disorders is commonly and currently used in many parts of the world, including the USA and Europe. This term has been chosen because it is not synonymous with a particular injury/disorder or hazard and sends a message that these problems are not necessarily a result of an injury. They often develop over time and as a result are called disorders, rather than injuries, that are due to a particular traumatic event.

Q. What is an example of a musculoskeletal disorder?

A. Common MSDs that can develop in the workplace include back pain, muscle strain, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow.

Q. Then what is ergonomics?

A. Ergonomics is the science of fitting the work to the worker. The goal is to optimize a worker's performance, health and wellbeing. It is considered a key to injury prevention.

Q. What is Ontario's MSD Prevention Series?

A. There are three parts to the Ontario MSD Prevention Series:

1. The **MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario** provides a framework for preventing MSDs in the workplace and information on understanding MSDs and the hazards associated with them.

2. The **Resource Manual for the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario** supports the guideline with information on implementing the process, understanding and recognizing MSD hazards, risk assessment and hazard controls.
3. The **MSD Prevention Toolbox** contains information sheets, sample surveys, hazard identification tools and control strategies.

Q. What is the purpose of the MSD Prevention Guideline Series?

- A. The guideline, with its resource manual and toolbox, is designed for everyone, to help individuals with various backgrounds and levels of knowledge to recognize, assess and help prevent MSDs.

Q. How can I get a copy of the MSD Prevention Series?

- A. MSD Prevention Series is available to download from [HOTLINK HERE](#). It is also available from the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board's (WSIB) website, and each of the other Health and Safety Association (HSA) websites, the Institute for Work and Health, and the Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders.

Q. Who developed the MSD Prevention Series for Ontario?

- A. The MSD guideline, resource manual and toolbox were developed by the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO) and the Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders (CRE-MSD). OHSCO is comprised of representatives from each of Ontario's health and safety system partners, which include the Ministry of Labour, the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB), the Institute for Work & Health, and the Health and Safety Associations.

Q. Why did OHSCO develop these documents? Why is MSD prevention important?

- A. MSDs account for over 40 per cent of all workplace injuries that are reported to the WSIB. The impact of these injuries on Ontario is staggering both from a financial and a societal perspective. In the past, these disorders have not received the same attention as other workplace hazards, often due to the fact that employers and workers have difficulty recognizing these hazards and the effect they have on workers tends to be progressive rather than sudden.

Q. I'm not an ergonomist. What do the MSD Prevention Guideline, resource manual and toolbox mean to me?

- A. You do not need to be an ergonomist to understand the MSD Prevention Guideline, resource manual and toolbox. In fact, the intended audience for the guideline is comprised of workers, employers, Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) members, Health and Safety Representatives, unions, associations, etc. The content of the guideline will inform readers about the primary risk factors associated with MSDs and suitable ways of controlling these risks. It introduces a framework for addressing MSD risks similar to an approach that would be used for other workplace risks.



Q. Where can I get a copy of these materials and what am I supposed to do with them?

A. You should download a copy of each of the documents from this website.

Q. Where can our organization get training and information on the issue of MSD prevention?

A. Contact ESAO - http://www.esao.on.ca/about_us/personnel.aspx

Q. What MSD sector-specific material is available?

A. There is MSD prevention material available from ESAO. Materials are also available from the health and safety system partners.

A new web-based MSD resources database is available at www.PreventionPractices.com/msd.html. This database allows users to browse for ergonomic tips and strategies on specific jobs, sectors and/or MSD topics.

Q. Will workplaces be expected to implement every step outlined in the Resource Manual for the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario and use all the tools in the MSD Prevention Toolbox?

A. The guideline, resource manual and toolbox present a framework for injury prevention that is applicable to any health and safety hazard. Workplaces should currently have a process to recognize and control any workplace hazard.

The guideline, resource manual and toolbox can be used as “Getting Started” documents for workplaces that do not have an effective approach to dealing with MSD issues. They do not have any authority associated with them. They are a resource guide only.

The toolbox samples are provided as a means of assisting workplaces to put their plans for recognizing and controlling MSD hazards into action. Their specific use is not compulsory.

Q. What are the benefits of having an MSD prevention program in place?

A. Benefits include:

- Improved worker satisfaction, morale and wellbeing;
- Reduced WSIB lost-time injury claims and the associated direct and indirect costs;
- Improved ability to retain experienced, knowledgeable and skilled workers;
- Reduced administrative costs related to claims management and investigations; and
- Increased quality, productivity and profits.

Q. How many workers are affected by work-related MSDs in Ontario?

A. According to the WSIB, in 2005 there were 38,615 MSDs resulting in lost-time at work. In 2006, there were 36,663 MSDs resulting in lost-time at work.

MSD claims make up over 40 per cent of all lost-time injuries in Ontario workplaces.



Q. Are there regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (OHSA) that address ergonomics?

- A. The OHSA requires employers to provide information, instruction, and supervision to workers and to take every precaution reasonable to ensure the health and safety of workers. Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) hazards that are present in the workplace must be recognized and precautions put in place to fulfill requirements under the OHSA. There are also specific sections, in the sector-based regulations under the OHSA, used to enforce proper ergonomic practices, including an employer fact sheet, incorporating an MSD focus during inspections of all workplaces and providing all inspectors with training to identify MSD hazards in the workplace during their workplace inspections.

The Ministry of Labour has been an active member of OHSCO's MSD prevention working sub-committee. The ministry has provided technical expertise and resources in the development of the guideline, resource manual, toolbox and the ongoing collection of sector-specific material.