

Facility Safety

Don't Overlook Ergonomics in Processes

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Every production has a process, whether it's creating something from raw materials or assembling parts to produce a final product. In many processes, there are many repetitive movements. Repetitive motion can lead to many health issues, like tendonitis or other musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). MSDs are one of the leading causes of workers' compensation and absenteeism in manufacturing, in turn causing a domino effect with losses in productivity and employee retention.

There are studies performed in many industries to study processes in production. Observations of workplace conditions and work processes, ergonomic job analyses, workplace surveys and interviews are some of the common proactive methods for identifying ergonomics-related injury risks. Some of the discovered risk factors include:

- Exerting excessive force
- Repetitive motion or performing the same similar task
- Processes that require awkward postures
- Localized pressure into the body
- Contact with vibrating surfaces

The risk of MSD injury depends on the frequency of the task performed, the level of required effort, duration of the task, plus other factors that could also contribute to injury.

Facilities should observe their production processes from an ergonomic standpoint and eliminate as many of the above risk factors as possible by implementing tools to reduce excessive force, creating interruption in repetitive tasks, raising or lowering workspaces or workers to avoid awkward postures, and introducing ergonomic flooring or mats over concrete to reduce pressure impact points on the body and vibrations.

The results of these efforts can significantly reverse the domino effect in both productivity and employee retention, with a direct correlation to workers' compensation and absenteeism.

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