

Nuclear Science Division Ergonomics Plan

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Introduction

Nuclear Science Division's goal is to minimize employee exposure to ergonomic hazards that lead to cumulative trauma disorders and related injuries and illnesses. Ergonomic hazards include industrial hazards (such as hand tool use and heavy lifting) and office hazards (such as computer and related hardware use). For Nuclear Science Division, office hazards are the primary ergonomic concern.

Industrial ergonomic hazards, because they are encountered infrequently by division employees, are best addressed one at a time. That is, ergonomic experts are consulted when a supervisor or an employee identifies a specific industrial ergonomic hazard, and the issues are resolved individually.

Office ergonomic hazards, however, are more frequently encountered by division employees. Office ergonomics, therefore, is the primary topic of this plan. Nuclear Science Division strives to prevent new and minimize existing injuries to employees who use office computers by providing employees with a three-tier plan, as described in PUB-3000, Chapter 17, "Ergonomics."

Tier 1: Office Ergonomics Training and Self-Assessment

All division employees who use a computer at work for more than an average of four hours a day must complete the on-line training course in ergonomics for computer users (EHS059). The on-line course not only provides training in office ergonomics but also offers the employee an opportunity to assess his or her own work station (self-assessment). The training requirement is triggered when an employee fills out a job hazards analysis (JHA) or physically moves his or her office. The employee's training profile lists EHS059 as a required course. Employees must update their ergonomics training annually by completing EHS058, a brief self-assessment refresher.

Tier 2: Workstation Evaluations for Lower-Risk Employees

For employees who have completed a self-assessment and have been determined to be at moderate or low risk for ergonomic injury, the Nuclear Science Division provides workstation evaluations if requested. Trained ergonomic advocates assigned to Nuclear Science Division perform these evaluations and document the results in the LBNL ergonomics database. Any Nuclear Science Division employee, their supervisor, or concerned safety professional may request an ergonomic evaluation at any time. Reasons for such requests include pain or discomfort, injury prevention, and installation of new computer equipment. If an employee is not experiencing discomfort, a trained ergonomic advocate assigned to Nuclear Science Division will perform the evaluation. For a member of the Coalition of University Employees (CUE), the ergonomic advocate must perform the evaluation within 90 days of request (see PUB-3000, Chapter 17.3.2). If an employee is in pain, an ergonomic expert will contact him or her, as described in the next section.

Tier 3: Workstation Evaluations for High-Risk Employees or Employees Experiencing Discomfort

When a workstation evaluation is requested because the employee has discomfort or pain or when an ergonomic self-assessment indicates that the employee is at high risk for ergonomic injury, an ergonomics expert performs a workstation evaluation. These evaluations are assigned the highest priority to ensure that they are performed promptly, recommendations are implemented in a timely fashion, and the evaluation is closed out as quickly as possible.

Completing and Closing Out Evaluations

Workstation evaluations often recommend actions that can't be completed immediately, such as purchasing new computer equipment, obtaining ergonomic accessories, or making changes to a workstation. For an employee who is not a member of CUE, the employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that recommendations are implemented as soon as possible (preferably within 30 to 60 days for routine evaluations; sooner if the employee is experiencing discomfort or pain). For a CUE member, the supervisor follows the time limits and documentation requirements stated in PUB-3000, Chapter 17.3.2.

The ergonomic evaluator, EHS liaison, and/or the division safety coordinator assist the supervisor by tracking the progress of the evaluation. When all recommendations are complete, the supervisor, evaluator, safety coordinator, or EHS liaison closes out the evaluation in the ergonomics database.

Tracking Plan Implementation

Regularly throughout the year, the division safety coordinator and EHS liaison meet to discuss progress in implementing this plan. They review the number of employees who have completed office ergonomics training and who have had their workstations evaluated. They discuss issues, trends, and solutions to potential problems with meeting the division's goal of preventing new and minimizing existing ergonomic injuries. The safety coordinator or liaison document the periodic review in meeting notes and database reports kept on file.