

Understanding & Implementing Requirements of the GSR

by Sharon Goodwin, Ergonomics Consultant, EWI Works, Calgary, AB

The Alberta government has proposed legislation relating to ergonomics. In a legislative review of the current General Safety Requirements of Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act, specific regulations relating to ergonomics have been developed. Industry and Labor associations prompted the government to recognize the high levels of manual handling-related injuries and musculoskeletal injuries in general, and have lobbied for more stringent laws to reduce injuries to Albertans at work.



In 1999, 35,440 workplace injuries and diseases took place where an individual lost time from work. According to Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE), 26% of these injuries & diseases were the result of overexertion and occurred while the individual was lifting, pulling, throwing or carrying objects. Twelve percent were due to bodily reactions to unnatural body positions involved in climbing, reaching, turning and bending.

Enactment of these regulations would mean that employers require a systematic approach for identifying ergonomic hazards, assessing the risk factors and controlling the risk of injury to workers.

(Continued on page 2)

Web based tools & training makes ergonomics more feasible

by Lorel Cook, Office Administrator, EWI Works, Edmonton, AB



Placing the needs of our clients first has always been the foundation of EWI Works. Taking advantage of the Internet as an inexpensive, yet high-impact medium for the delivery of ergonomic services, we continue to keep that promise.

To augment our proven consulting services, EWI Works now offers tools and customized training on the Web to assist organizations wanting to address ergonomic concerns, making the process more efficient and feasible.

Speedier solutions to employee inquiries

Whether looking to reduce discomfort already experienced at the workstation, or seeking proactive advice on workstation set-up, staff can now assess their own workspace and get ergonomic advice instantly with the online **Self-Assessment Questionnaire**, **Physical Symptoms Recommendations**, and **Office Setup Guide**.

These tools identify potential risks as well as provide solutions to reduce these risks and/or discomfort. The ability to access ergonomic information on the Internet whenever needed helps reduce the demand on Health and Safety personnel and ensures that employees' needs are met quickly.

Continued on Page 2, see "High-tech Ergonomics"

In This Issue

Ergonomics & the GSR	P. 1
Web based ergonomic services	P. 1
Tear-out ergonomic checklist	P. 3
Safety in the snow	P. 5

Ergonomics & the GSR (cont.)

Public consultation of the new Occupational Health and Safety Regulations has been completed and the final comments are under review. The expected timeframe for release of the regulation is March 31st, 2002 with a grace period for compliance, which has not yet been determined.

The final draft of the OHS Regulation is available on the Workplace Health & Safety, Alberta Human Resources and Employment Website at www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs. Part 12 encompasses the sections pertaining to ergonomics.

It is likely that some employers may all ready have systems in place for identifying health hazards which could be adapted to specifically address ergonomics. Some examples may be health and safety audits and training programs. Support and expert advice for employers and industry associations can be attained from certified professional ergonomists by contacting the Alberta Chapter of the Association of Canadian Ergonomists (tel.

(403) 284-2589) and requesting a list of consultants in your area.

EWI Works has all ready developed a number of strategies to assist employers and other groups with broadening their internal resources through skill-based training programs and development of in-house tools. Please contact either one of our offices directly for further information (In Edmonton, call (780) 436-0024 or in Calgary, call (403) 802-0886).

Sharon has over a decade of experience in Occupational Health & Safety, advising and developing legislation as well as health and safety programs both in Canada and Australia. She has worked for EWI Works as an Ergonomics Consultant for two years.

High-Tech Ergonomics (cont.)

Streamlining the ergonomic implementation process

Ergonomic Audit

Information gathering to conduct an ergonomics audit and determine workstation needs can be time consuming and costly as pre and post-change questionnaires are often manually administered. Self-administered pre/post-change questionnaires, available online, speeds up the efficiency of an audit and reduces the resources and time required.

Online Training

Ergonomic training educates both new employees and seasoned staff to create awareness and reinforcement of ergonomic principles and how to apply them in a daily work routine.

Until now, the training sessions were conducted onsite by an ergonomist, in groups of approximately 15 to 20 employees at a time, over one to two days. Thanks to a collaborative effort with ESH Connect, a Web-Based Training (WBT) development company out of California, EWI Works can now deliver our customized training



programs online. The interactive training package can be completed when convenient at an individual workstation, takes approximately 45 minutes to complete, and is available to the individual user for one year of unlimited use. Ergonomic WBT eliminates the need to remove large groups of staff from operational duties, therefore decreasing the cost of lost production time, and in turn makes the training stage of an ergonomic program more palatable.





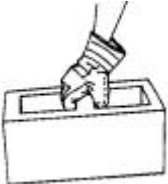

While the on-line tools and Web-based ergonomic training does not completely replace a need for the initial visit and consultation of a certified professional ergonomist, it enhances the overall development and delivery of a cost effective and solid, results-based ergonomic program.

For more information on EWI Works' online tools and training, contact us at (780) 436-0024 or by email at info@ewiworks.com.









Lorel wears many hats at EWI Works, including office administration, maintaining the newsletter, editing reports and presentation materials and assists in marketing efforts. Most of all, she enjoys being that cheery voice at the other end of the phone whenever clients call.



Special Section: Tear-out Ergonomic Checklist (used with permission from WISHA)

Caution Zone Checklist (WAC 296-62-05105)		<i>Use one sheet for each position evaluated.</i>
Job Position evaluated:	Date:	Number of employees in this position:
Movements or postures that are a regular and foreseeable part of the job, occurring more than <i>one day per week</i> , and more frequently than <i>one week per year</i> .		
Awkward Posture		Check if done in this job position
	1. Working with the hand(s) above the head, or the elbow(s) above the shoulders more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Working with the neck or back bent more than 30 degrees (without support and without the ability to vary posture) more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Squatting more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Kneeling more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Hand Force		Check if done in this job position
	5. Pinching an unsupported object(s) weighing 2 or more pounds per hand, or pinching with a force of 4 or more pounds per hand, more than 2 hours per day (comparable to pinching half a ream of paper).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Gripping an unsupported object(s) weighing 10 or more pounds per hand, or gripping with a force of 10 or more pounds per hand, more than 2 hours total per day (comparable to clamping light duty automotive jumper cables onto a battery).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ergonomic Checklist Page 2

Highly Repetitive Motion		Check if done in this job position
 <p>Repetition</p>	7. Repeating the same motion with the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists or hands (excluding keying activities) with little or no variation every few seconds, more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Performing intensive keying more than 4 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeat Impact		Check if done in this job position
	9. Using the hand (heel/base of palm) or knee as a hammer more than 10 times per hour, more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heavy, Frequent or Awkward Lifting (A simple scale can be used to determine the weight of materials)		Check if done in this job position
	10. Lifting object weighing more than 75 pounds once per day or more than 55 pounds more than 10 times per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Lifting objects weighing more than 10 pounds if done more than twice per minute, more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Lifting objects weighing more than 25 pounds above the shoulders, below the knees or at arms length more than 25 times per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moderate to High Hand-Arm Vibration (Closely estimate or obtain the vibration value of the tool in use)		Check if done in this job position
	13. Using impact wrenches, carpet strippers, chain saws, percussive tools (jack hammers, scalers, riveting or chipping hammers) or other tools that typically have high vibration levels, more than 30 minutes total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Using grinders, sanders, jigsaws or other hand tools that typically have moderate vibration levels more than 2 hours total per day.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Safety in the snow

Originally adapted by AAROT from "Don't Slip Now" by: Steve Kuyltjes, BScOT

It's that time of year again... trees are covered with a heavenly white blanket of snow and (groan) so is the driveway and sidewalk. Before hauling out the shovel, keep in mind a few tips to prevent strained muscles, broken bones, and that aching back.



Getting Started

- * Limber up those muscles and strrrretch! Stretch the leg muscles, your spine, and shoulders. Do some shoulder rotations and light arm swings to get the blood flowing.
- * Don't overdress or your body could overheat. Do wear proper footwear with good grips or treads.
- * Pick the right size shovel: one that is too big means you'll be pushing and lifting 20 pounds of snow, one that is too small means the job will take you until bedtime!
- * Use salt or sand on hard packed snow to speed up melting or provide traction.

**EWI Works
(Ergo Works Inc.)**

**Head Office
PO Box 82002
2037-111 Street
Edmonton, AB
T6J 7E6**

**Ph: (780) 436-0024
Fax: (780) 436-0092**

**Branch Office
2007-2 St SW
Calgary, AB
T2S 1S4**

www.ewiworks.com

info@ewiworks.com

Certified Professional Ergonomists for proven results.

While on the job, remember



- * Grasp the handle with hands shoulder width apart for better leverage.
- * Use a light pushing motion at first and shovel a small amount of snow to prepare and warm-up the body for the rest of the job. Then, shovel smaller and lighter loads rather than one large load.
- * Bend at your knees and use your larger leg muscles to lift. **Never lift with the back!**
- * Don't forget to breathe when lifting (ie: don't hold your breath!)
- * **Don't twist the back when tossing snow.** Toss the snow directly in front of you.

Treat shoveling snow like any strenuous workout

- * Take rest breaks and pace yourself.
- * Forcing a poorly conditioned heart to work too hard for too long may lead to overload.
- * If you are at risk of heart disease, have a history of heart trouble, high blood pressure or back and joint pain, consult a health care professional before attempting any strenuous activity, including snow shoveling.
- * If you can afford it, consider a snow blower or hire someone else to do the job!
