



ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

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1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the USC Ergonomic Program is to establish procedures and responsibilities for identifying ergonomic risks and developing and implementing corrective actions to reduce or eliminate such risks. Ergonomics is an applied science that studies the interaction between people and their work environment in order to reduce injury, improve performance, and increase productivity.

2.0 APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This program is applied to all university employees that through their work activities are at risk of developing a repetitive motion injury. The scope of the Ergonomic Program is to improve the safety, comfort, and efficiency of our workers, to prevent repetitive motion injuries, to eliminate ergonomic hazards

3.0 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

California: California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 5110 – Repetitive Motion Injuries.

USC Policy: **Ergonomic Safety Policy 015**

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI)/ RMI Incident - RMI and RMI Incidents are injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints and spinal discs, that are developed by workers when a major part of their job involves word processing, bending over, awkward work posture, lifting heavy objects, using continuous force, working with vibrating equipment, impact tools, manual pipetting and doing repetitive motions. Acute trauma or injury caused by a single instantaneous event does not fall within this definition

RMI Risk Factors

Frequency – The rate at which specific physical motions or exertions are repeated

Force - Level of physical exertion by or pressure to any part of the body

Duration - The length of any period of work activity that poses a RMI risk.

Posture - The position of a body part during work activity

Vibration and Temperature - Exposure to localized or whole body vibration or exposure of hands and feet to temperature extremes which causes discomfort

Recovery Time - The amount of time separating repetitive motions or exertions, or the amount of time separating periods of any work activity posing a RMI risk, which is needed to prevent fatigue of the body parts performing the activity

Mechanical Stress - Stress on a small area of soft tissue, by a small, firm surface or object.

Ergonomic hazards - Workplace conditions that pose a biomechanical stress to the worker or that contribute to the risk of developing RMIs. Such hazardous workplace conditions include, but are not limited to, faulty workstation layout, improper work methods, improper tools, and job design problems such as awkward postures, force requirements, and repetition rate.

Engineering Controls - RMI risk control measures, which include but are not limited to: Devices (such as adjustable workstations, tables, chairs, ergonomic accessories, equipment, and tools) and physical modifications to work stations, equipment, tools, production processes, or any other aspect of the work environment.

Administrative Controls - RMI risk control measure, which includes short breaks, job rotation, and stretching techniques.

Ergonomic Evaluation & Control - process for identifying, analyzing and using feasible engineering and administrative controls to prevent Repetitive Motion Injuries

RMI Signs and Symptoms - Workers suffering from RMIs may experience less strength for gripping, less range of motion, loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks. Common symptoms include:

- Painful Joints
- Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, knees
- Fingers or toes turning white
- Back or neck pain

- Stiffness
- Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs
- Swelling or inflammation
- Burning sensation

Corrective Action – Once a RMI hazard has been identified, either by the department, workers compensation, employee or EHS staff, a Workstation Ergonomic Evaluation must be performed. Recommendations for corrective will be given and the department or employee must implement the corrections in a timely manner. These corrections should be made within 90 days.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Employee Level Responsibilities

It is every USC employee's responsibility to use ergonomic work practices while performing their job function, and be familiar with the USC Ergonomic Program. **Employees** have the responsibility to:

- Obtain information about the USC Ergonomic Program for the RMCS web site (<http://srm.usc.edu>).
- Evaluate their workstation for ergonomic safety.
- Comply with all established engineering, work practices, and administrative procedures/requirements. Make behavioral changes to implement personal improvements to their workstations.
- Notify their supervisor, EH&S Department, and visit the Faculty Staff Clinic (UPC) or the Ambulatory Health Care Center (HSC) of any signs or symptoms of RMIs.
 - Encourage other employees to participate in the ergonomics process of identifying and correcting RMI risks.
- Participate in Ergonomics Teams as needed to resolve specific ergonomic challenges or brainstorm for workstation improvements.
- Receive ergonomics communication and/or ergonomics awareness training.

5.2 Managers/Supervisors Level Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the department to take the necessary measures to ensure the ergonomic safety of their employees. **Supervisors** have the responsibility to:

- Complete Supervisors Report of Injury with employees with alleged RMI symptoms and instruct them to seek medical attention at the Faculty Staff Clinic (UPC) or the Ambulatory Health Care Center (HSC) for diagnosis and necessary care.
- Encourage early reporting of RMI hazards, signs and symptoms.
- Communicate with employees periodically about ergonomics.
- Encourage and support employee participation in the ergonomics program.

- Support the ergonomics process through scheduling employees to attend awareness training, implementing recommended changes or purchasing equipment when required.
- Notify the **Ergonomics Process Owner** of any significant equipment modifications/ upgrades/additions or layout changes that can be anticipated to alter employee exposure to RMI hazards.
- Assure that appropriate ergonomic control measures for a new or an existing job have been taken to include, but not be limited to, workstation or tool redesign, using adjustable fixtures, job rotation, and implementing work breaks.
 - If an RMI hazard is identified for a new or an existing job, you shall implement the Corrective Action.
 - Ergonomic safety measures must be implemented in a timely manner
- Participate in Ergonomics Teams as needed to resolve specific ergonomic challenges or brainstorm for workstation improvements as required.
- Attend ergonomic awareness training.

5.3 Ergonomic Assessors Level Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will ensure that an effective Ergonomics Program is maintained and implemented University wide. **Ergonomic Assessors** have the responsibility to:

- Complete proactive ergonomic assessments via visual observations and reactive ergonomic assessments as scheduled through the Ergonomics Process Owner.
- Update and maintain tracking system database.
- Complete ergonomic summary reports for the reactive and proactive ergonomic assessments.
- Receive skill-based ergonomics training.
- Communicate monthly with Ergonomic Process Owner.
 - Set plan for next month
 - Complete technical review

5.4 Ergonomics Process Owner Level Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will ensure that an effective Ergonomics Program is maintained and implemented University wide. The **Ergonomics Process Owner** has the responsibility to:

- Draft Ergonomics Program and establish overall goals.
- Update and maintain ergonomic database/spreadsheet.
- Update and maintain ergonomic program documentation.
- Track progress of the ergonomics program.
- Obtain resources for the ergonomics program.
- Ensure a copy of the ergonomics standard, program and information about RMI signs, symptoms and hazards is available and readily accessible by employees.

- Lead the Ergonomic Assessors and prioritize ergonomic improvement activities.
- Develop an annual ergonomics improvement plan with specific activities and metrics to support the annual goals, objectives and strategy.
- Coordinate skill-based ergonomics training for all ergonomic assessors.
- Coordinate ergonomic awareness training for all USC employees.
 - Office
 - Non-office
- Receive skill-based ergonomics training
- Hold Quarterly meetings with **Director** to complete loss reviews.
- Create monthly reports on ergonomic projects.
- Prepare loss data review for **Director**.
- Communicate monthly with **Ergonomic Assessors** to review of current projects.
 - Set plan for next month
 - Complete technical review
- Conduct proactive and reactive ergonomic workstation assessments for the office and non-office using any combination of the Workstation Ergonomics Checklist, The ABC's of Adjusting the Computer Workstation, and the BRIEF survey tool to ergonomic risk.
 - Upon recognition of at-risk jobs, EHS will evaluate the workplace and recommend corrections of the ergonomic hazards. This information must also be entered into a tracking system database.
- Complete workstation follow-ups after the ergonomic assessors have completed an ergonomic intervention.
- Provide summaries to departments with repetitive motion injuries and to university departments that have employees that perform similar jobs.
- Act as a liaison with Purchasing on ergonomic recommendations and future equipment purchases. This could include reviewing new equipment designs.
 - Assist in the redesign of workstations, tooling and fixtures that contribute to the risks of RMIs to employees
- Act as a liaison with 3rd Party Workers Compensation Administrator.
- Develop ergonomic purchasing standards. Utilize the USC intranet to develop web-based purchasing guides.
- Meet with ergonomic vendors to discuss equipment.
- Develop, maintain and communicate the tracking system database that includes jobs, risks and corrective actions.
- Communicate with employees about ergonomics when an RMI injury occurs.

5.5 Ergonomics Director Level Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will ensure that an effective Ergonomics Program is maintained and implemented University wide. The **Director** has the responsibility to:

- Create written Ergonomics program for USC.
- Support and ensure that all elements of this program are implemented completely for the protection of all employees.
- Appoint an Ergonomics Process Owner reporting directly to the Director.
- Ensure an effective RMI reporting system exists within each department and that all employees know the reporting steps.
- Evaluate Ergonomics program on a triennial process. This review could be held in conjunction with USC's internal audit program.
- Develop Executive level support for the Ergonomics program. This would involve updating the executive team:
 - Loss data
 - Incidence rates
 - Workers compensation statistics
 - Risk data
 - Execute awareness training for executives
 - Ergonomic projects
 - Successful case studies
- Hold quarterly meetings with Ergonomics Process Owner to complete loss reviews.
- Hold semi-annual meetings with Ergonomic Assessors to review ergonomic projects.

5.6 Ergonomics Executive Level Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will ensure that an effective Ergonomics Program is maintained and implemented University wide. **Executives** have the responsibility to:

- Support and ensure that all elements of this program are implemented completely for the protection of all employees.
- Meet with Director to receive Ergonomic Program updates.
- Encourage Department participation in the Ergonomic Program.
- Receive ergonomics communication and/or ergonomics awareness training.

6.0 GENERAL ERGONOMIC PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

This section describes the necessary elements of USC's Ergonomics Program:

1. Management Leadership
2. Risk Assessment and Prioritization
3. Hazard Prevention and Control
4. Information Sharing
5. Reporting Procedures/Medical Management
6. Process Management
7. Training

6.1 Management Leadership

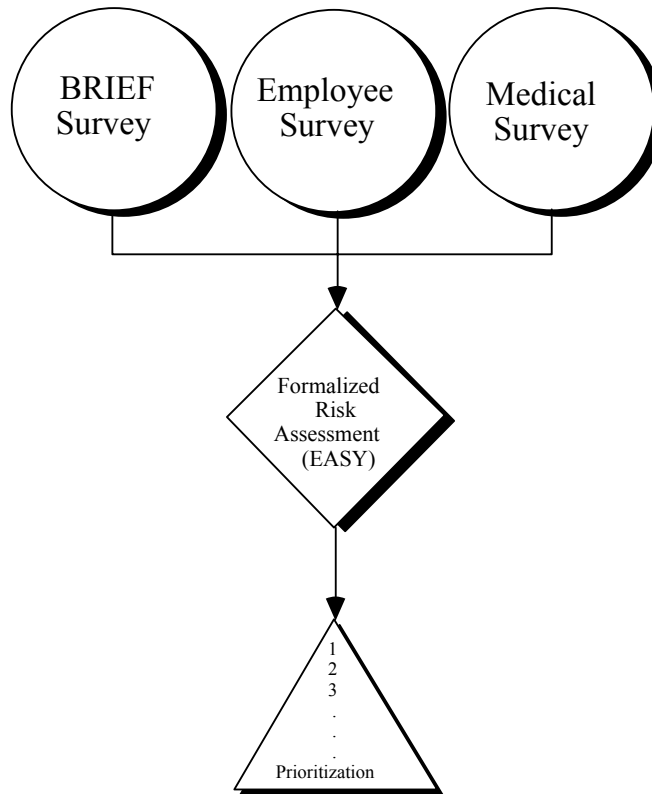
Business Affairs will set ergonomics improvement priorities based on employee risk exposure and operational initiatives. The EH&S Director will lead the Ergonomics program and utilize a team consisting of the following as applicable based on USC’s functional make-up:

- Safety Staff
- Safety Assessors

6.2 Risk Assessment and Prioritization

The EASY™ method will be used as the worksite analysis tool. The EASY™ method (see diagram below) identifies and ranks operations by degree of RMI hazard. This is accomplished through a summary that integrates the BRIEF™ risk assessment tool (see diagram below) with injury/illness data and employee feedback into a systematic process. The highest priority operations, based on the EASY™ rankings, should be selected first for solution implementation.

RMI Risk Prioritization Easy Method



BRIEF Assessment Tool

BRIEF™ Survey BASELINE RISK IDENTIFICATION OF ERGONOMIC FACTORS

Identification Job Name: _____ Dept: _____ Date: _____ Zone: _____ Analyst: _____ Station: _____ Record: _____		Directions • Mark all appropriate Posture, Force, Duration, and Frequency boxes. • Total the number of marked boxes. • For body areas with a total of 2 or more, mark the body area in the Risk Summary box.		Risk Summary <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Left</th> <th>Right</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Hand/Wrist</td> <td>Hand/Wrist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elbow</td> <td>Elbow</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shoulder</td> <td>Shoulder</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Neck</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Back</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Legs</td> </tr> </table>			Left	Right	Hand/Wrist	Hand/Wrist	Elbow	Elbow	Shoulder	Shoulder	Neck		Back		Legs																																																				
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6.3 Hazard Prevention and Control

Ergonomic hazards identified, as high priority with an EASY™ score of 5 or above will be corrected using one or more of the following methods:

- Engineering controls
- Work practices controls
- Administrative controls

All high priority job/tasks will have corrective action plans written after the completion of the ergonomic assessment. Simple solutions, defined as low cost opportunities for ergonomic improvements, will be implemented within three months of the assessment. Complex solutions, defined as opportunities for ergonomic improvements that are high

cost or require significant engineering involvement, will be implemented within a time frame determined by the Ergonomic Team.

Ergonomic Assessors will be utilized to resolve specific ergonomic challenges. These will consist of employees, operators and supervisors from the area for simple solutions. For those job/tasks requiring significant capital or engineering involvement, the Ergonomics Steering Team will include trained Engineers/Technical Staff and area managers. H&S Professionals or engineers/technical staff trained in this function will review any changed, designed, or purchased equipment. Ergonomics/Process Improvements and Ergonomics Design Templates will be utilized as guides for designing/modifying equipment and workstation designs and set-ups to resolve ergonomic challenges. Control measures will be planned, evaluated, and implemented for identified RMI hazards. Progress will be tracked to ensure that established plans are fulfilled.

6.4 Information Sharing

The **Ergonomic Assessors** will communicate effective controls to high-risk job/tasks to **Ergonomics Process Owner**. An ergonomics-tracking database will be created to track the ergonomic risk assessments completed for office and non-office assessments. Information recommended to be in the database is the following:

1. Job Name
2. Department
3. Job Tasks
4. EASY Data
5. Number of Employees Involved
6. Frequency the task is completed
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Semi-annually
 - e. Annually
7. Ergonomic Risk Factors
8. Employee Discomfort Data and Comments
9. Injury Data
10. Injury Cost Data
11. Injury Lost Work Day Data
12. Safety Risk Factors
13. Personal Protective Equipment
14. Recommendations
15. Follow-up

6.5 Reporting Procedures/Medical Management

All **employees** who report RMIs will have access to prompt and effective medical management, including access to health care professionals for evaluation, treatment, and follow up. When possible, employees will be assigned to jobs that meet work restrictions recommended by health care providers.

- Any employee who experiences a RMI is required to immediately report the injury to his/her supervisor and then seek medical attention at the Faculty Staff Clinic (UPC) or the Ambulatory Health Care Center (HSC)
- The supervisor must complete the "SUPERVISOR'S REPORT OF INJURY" form and return it to the Workers' Compensation Office within 24 hours of the injury
- The Workers' Compensation Office will monitor the employee throughout the recovery period and will ensure that appropriate treatment/rehabilitation is provided in order for the worker to return to work as soon as possible
- Workers' Compensation will provide timely notification of suspected RMI incidents to EHS

6.6 Process Management

The **Director** will monitor the effectiveness of the ergonomics program and controls with a formal review at least every three years. This monitoring will include:

- Measures to assess the functioning of program activities.
- Measures to quantitatively assess the success of the program and specific controls that have been implemented.

The **Ergonomics Process Owner** will develop a plan annually that formalizes measurable goals and defined resources for USC's ergonomics program. The **Ergonomics Process Owner** will periodically monitor the following key activities with performance checked against metrics:

- Ergonomics team activities.
- Implementation of improvement projects.
- Training plans.
- Evaluations of changed, designed, or purchased equipment.

6.7 Training

Training will be provided to employees diagnosed by a physician with a repetitive motion injury (RMI), employees performing an identical job, work process, or operation as the individual diagnosed with an RMI, as well as any individual requesting training or concerned about the ergonomic safety of their work environment. The Ergonomic Safety training course will introduce the concept of ergonomics, explain why an ergonomics program is necessary, provide an overview of the USC Ergonomic Program, identify the exposures which have been associated with RMIs, emphasize the importance of reporting symptoms and injuries to a supervisor, and provide methods to minimize RMIs.

Communications will be provided to managers, supervisors and employees in the role they will play in the program, such as recognition of RMIs and importance of early reporting.

7.0 PROGRAM APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Date Revised: March 15, 2004 *By:* Jody Van Leuven, Enrique Garcia

Date Revised: February 4, 2006 *By:* Alfred M. Bouziane

BRIEF™ Survey

BASELINE RISK IDENTIFICATION OF ERGONOMIC FACTORS

Risk Summary	
Left	Right
Hand/Wrist	Hand/Wrist
Elbow	Elbow
Shoulder	Shoulder
Neck	
Back	
Legs	

Identification

Job Name: _____

Dept: _____ Date: _____

Zone: _____ Analyst: _____

Station: _____ Record: _____

Directions

- Mark all appropriate Posture, Force, Duration, and Frequency boxes.
- Total the number of marked boxes.
- For body areas with a total of 2 or more, mark the body area in the Risk Summary box.

	Left			Right			Neck	Back	Legs				
	Hand and Wrist	Elbow	Shoulder	Hand and Wrist	Elbow	Shoulder							
Posture	Pinch Grip	Radial Dev	Forearm Rotation	≥ 45°	Pinch Grip	Radial Dev	Forearm Rotation	≥ 45°	≥ 20°	≥ 20°	Squat		
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Duration	≥ 10 secs			≥ 10 secs	≥ 10 secs			≥ 10 secs	≥ 10 secs	≥ 30% of Day			
Frequency	≥ 30/min		≥ 2/min	≥ 2/min	≥ 30/min		≥ 2/min	≥ 2/min	≥ 2/min	≥ 2/min	≥ 2/min		
Total													

Physical Stressors

Check the type of stressor present and shade the area of the body affected.

Vibration (V)

Mechanical Stress (M)

Low Temperatures (L)

Comments / Observations

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Version 2.1

RMI Risk Assessment