

Dear valued partner,

Happy New Year from Rockwood Casualty! In this month's safety newsletter, we will be discussing ergonomics. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) can be prevented. Ergonomics --- fitting a job to a person --- helps lessen muscle fatigue, increases productivity, and reduces the number and severity of work-related MSDs.

Which of the following could be considered an ergonomic hazard?

- a) Lifting an object with your back
- b) Using the right tool for the job task
- c) Lifting an object with your legs
- d) Job rotation to reduce repetitive tasks

*Answer at the end of the email.*



(Missed a previous email? [Click here](#) to see an archive of previous month's safety emails on Rockwood's Loss Control website.)



## WHAT IS Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is a scientific discipline that designs and arranges workplaces, products, and systems to ensure they fit and adapt to the people who use them. Ergonomics is often used interchangeably with 'human factors,' especially in North America. The primary goal of ergonomics is to create a more comfortable, efficient, and safe work environments by considering human beings' physical and psychological needs and limitations. This can be anything from the chair you sit in, to the angle in which you reach for product on a production line, to the body position in which you lift a piece of scrap metal. Ergonomics play a role in our everyday life.

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### What are the Benefits of Promoting Ergonomics Safety?

#### Helps reduce costs

By systematically reducing ergonomic risk factors, you can prevent costly MSDs. With approximately \$1 out of every \$3 in workers' compensation costs attributed to MSDs, this represents an opportunity for significant cost savings.

#### Helps prevent other incidents and injuries

Workers who experience discomfort on the job may find shortcuts or workarounds that could result in incidents and injuries such as slips, falls, and lacerations. Implementing an ergonomics program and encouraging workers to report ergonomic issues early helps prevent MSDs as well as other common workplace incidents.

### Improves overall productivity

Healthy employees are your most valuable asset; creating and fostering the safety & health culture at your company will lead to improved productivity for your organization. Effective ergonomic safety programs can promote good posture at all times, less exertion, fewer motions, and better heights and reaches, thus helping employees to work more comfortably and efficiently in their workstations.



### Helps foster employee engagement and satisfaction

Employees notice when the company is putting forth its best efforts to ensure their health and safety. It shows your company's commitment to safety and health as a core value. If an employee does not experience fatigue and discomfort during their workday, it can reduce turnover, decrease absenteeism, improve morale, and increase employee involvement.



## SAFETY TIPS FOR Promoting Proper Ergonomics

*Follow these tips to help avoid incident or injury:*

	<p><b><u>WORKSTATION IMPROVEMENTS:</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redesign workstations to eliminate awkward postures.</li><li>• Provide adjustable equipment that can be used by workers to allow neutral postures.</li><li>• Maintain good body posture.</li></ul>
	<p><b><u>WHEN TRANSPORTING AND HANDLING:</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be knowledgeable about body limitations.</li><li>• Provide carts for transporting materials to eliminate lifting.</li><li>• Require all loads to be labeled with their weight.</li><li>• When lifting, keep your back straight and lift with your legs.</li><li>• Assign two or more staff to lift heavy objects depending on weight.</li><li>• Lift slowly and carefully.</li><li>• Don't twist or turn your spine while carrying the load.</li><li>• Use shoulder pads to cushion loads carried on the shoulder.</li><li>• Use knee pads for kneeling tasks.</li><li>• Store materials at waist height to minimize reaching.</li><li>• Design containers with handles for easy gripping.</li></ul>



**STAFF  
SCHEDULING  
AND TRAINING:**

- Rotate workers among different tasks to avoid repetitive motions.
- Improve the work schedule to minimize excessive overtime that causes fatigue.
- Increase staff to reduce individual workloads.
- Provide sufficient employee breaks.
- Adequate recovery time can reduce fatigue.
- Provide workers with training on ergonomics policies and procedures.



**GENERAL  
HOUSEKEEPING**

- Follow good housekeeping practices.
- Keep floors free of obstruction.
- Use tools in good condition that fits the hand.
- Properly maintain power tools to reduce exposure to vibration.
- Use gloves to protect against vibration and rough surfaces.
- Always practice proper machine handling.



ROCKWOOD

**Rockwood Resources:**

- [Back Safety](#) – Toolbox Talk
- [Conveyors and Stationary Equipment: Shoveling](#) – Toolbox Talk
- [Material Handling: Lifting and Carrying](#) - Toolbox Talk
- [Back Safety- Basic Lifting Practices](#) – Poster
- [Back Safety- Lift With Your Legs](#) - Poster
- You can find additional Rockwood Toolbox Talks [here](#).

**MSHA, OSHA and other Resources:**

- [Ergonomics - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)
- [About Ergonomics and Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders | Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders](#) – CDC and NIOSH
- [Ergonomics](#) – Please see this valuable link for Training, Reading, Videos, and other Tools provided by the National Safety Council (NSC)



## Learn more about **Ergonomics** on Streamery

Every Rockwood policy includes access to Streamery, a vast safety library with videos, quizzes and more resources to help you promote safety in your workplace. If you don't have access, contact us to get a username. Enter the SKU number below to find the recommended video.

Watch [Streamery](#) videos on **Ergonomics**:

- **Industrial Ergonomics:** 13 min / SKU: 2516 + 2516-S / English & Spanish
- **Repetitive Motion: Reducing the Risk:** 6 min / SKU: 5455 / English
- **Understanding & Controlling Ergonomic Risk Factors:** 19 min / SKU: 3260 + 3260 - / English & Spanish
- **Office Ergonomics:** 12 min / SKU: 3232 / English
- **Many more on Streamery**



## BONUS MATERIALS:

### 1. OSHA RECORDKEEPING

Each February through April, employers with more than 10 employees must post a summary of the injuries and illnesses recorded the previous year. Records must be maintained at the worksite for at least 5 years. If you need more information on if you fall under this requirement or what kind of information is required of you, please visit this link: [Recordkeeping - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) or reach out to the Rockwood Loss Control team at the email listed below.

### 2. WINTER DRIVING

“Whether it’s snow, sleet or ice, winter weather can cause extremely dangerous road conditions. In 2022 there were 498 fatal traffic crashes, and an estimated 32,213 injury crashes that occurred when there was snow/sleet conditions at the time of the crash. Preparing yourself – and your vehicle – for winter weather is key.” Follow these tips from the National Highway Safety Administration, OSHA, and FEMA to help protect you during these winter months:

[Winter Weather Driving Tips: Prepare Your Vehicle | NHTSA](#)

[Winter Driving | OSHA](#)

[10 Tips to Stay Safe on the Road this Winter | FEMA.gov](#)

### 3. SEAT BELT COVERS



Don't forget that Rockwood Casualty is providing **FREE** high visibility seatbelt covers to our insured to assist in enforcement of seatbelt use by employees. Please contact [safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com](mailto:safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com) to make a request for your company and specify orange or yellow.

**Questions? Feel free to reach out:** As always, your Rockwood partners are available to answer your questions and help you promote safety in the workplace. Contact Rockwood Loss Control for any support you need.

**ANSWER: Which of the following could be considered an ergonomic hazard?**

- a) Lifting an object with your back**
- b) Using the right tool for the job task
- c) Lifting an object with your legs
- d) Job rotation to reduce repetitive tasks

*This would be an example of improper lifting technique and could result in back strain or a more serious musculoskeletal disorder. Always squat down, keeping your back straight, and lift with your legs.*



#RockwoodSafetySolutions #LossControl #SafetyTips

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Rockwood Loss Control Team

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