

Musculoskeletal Management

Musculoskeletal Disorders at Work

HSE Statement:

Employers must protect workers from the risks of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) being caused or made worse by work.

MSDs include injuries and conditions that can affect the back, joints and limbs.

HSE state you

- can do things to prevent or minimise the risk of your workers (and others who may be affected by what they do) developing MSDs
- cannot prevent all MSDs, so early reporting of symptoms, proper treatment and suitable rehabilitation are essential

The parts of the body most likely to be affected by MSDs are:

- the lower back
- shoulders, forearms, wrists and hands, as well as the neck
- the hips, legs, knees, ankles and feet

Workers can have different kinds of MSDs at the same time.

Manage the Risk

You must manage the risk of MSDs in your workplace. If these risks exist, you must consider both the requirements for a general risk assessment and specific assessments of other risks, for example, from:

- manual handling
- repetitive work and awkward postures
- the health risks of working with display screen equipment such as PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones
- exposure to vibration, for example from driving mobile machinery over rough ground or using powered, hand-held tools

It is important to act on any absence relating to MSD along with instances of obvious discomfort in the workplace.



Return to work assessments should be supported by the Isle of Man Occupational Health Team for those returning from long term sickness absence.

Managers Review – Musculoskeletal Activities

For support in carrying out a more detailed assessment or review, please contact the Health, Safety and Welfare Team by e-mailing: safetyadvice@gov.im

Area Information	
Department and Division	
Location	
Senior Manager for Site	
Name of Assessor	
Date of Initial Assessment	
Functions	
Do employees working in the Department have a history of health conditions which could be associated or triggered by the nature of the activities?	<i>Add brief description of the conditions</i>
Has professional advice been received about workplace adjustments e.g. by a Health and Safety or occupational health practitioner?	Yes/No <i>Record professional advice received about workplace adjustments.</i>
What kinds of physical activity are your employees exposed to?	<input type="checkbox"/> heavy physical labour <input type="checkbox"/> heavy lifting <input type="checkbox"/> repeated movements <input type="checkbox"/> unfavourable positions <input type="checkbox"/> prolonged work tasks <input type="checkbox"/> continuous sitting or standing <input type="checkbox"/> work tasks that need to be performed time and time again or with great precision <input type="checkbox"/> exposure to vibration
Under what conditions are your employees working?	<input type="checkbox"/> long working hours



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	<input type="checkbox"/> infrequent opportunities for breaks <input type="checkbox"/> high speed in work tasks <input type="checkbox"/> lack of variety <input type="checkbox"/> lack of control over the speed of work tasks (e.g. assembly line work) <input type="checkbox"/> little support from colleagues or managers <input type="checkbox"/> inaccurate, contradictory role distribution
Do your employees belong to the following most vulnerable groups in relation to..?	<input type="checkbox"/> age <input type="checkbox"/> sex <input type="checkbox"/> height <input type="checkbox"/> arm length <input type="checkbox"/> health status and, if applicable, past MSD incidents <input type="checkbox"/> induction to and knowledge of working methods and safety instructions

Return to Work Guidance

Whether the discomfort is work related or personal, there is a responsibility on the employee and manager to manage the potential risk of worsening or has the potential to cause serious harm through the works carried out inside the workplace.

Short Term Absence

Once notified that an employee is absence due to musculoskeletal discomfort, make attempts to

- Identify whether discomfort is work or personal related
- Understand what if anything can be done to reduce discomfort in the workplace with the individuals associated duties and tasks
- monitor the return of the employee
- On day one of their return, commit to meeting with the individual to understand discomfort, triggers, and any adjustments to prevent further discomfort.
- Plan for any potential controls to be introduced – training, equipment and whether to incorporate breaks into the role.

Long Term Absence

Once notified that an employee is returning to work following long term sickness absence due to musculoskeletal discomfort



- Identify whether discomfort is work or personal related
- Understand what if anything can be done to reduce discomfort in the workplace with the individuals associated duties and tasks
- monitor the intended return date of the employee
- remain in engaged with the employee during absence and discuss any potential adjustments or changes necessary to support them in the workplace
- agree a return to work date and ensure that the start time for day 1 is an appropriate time for committing to a return to work meeting
- understand whether or not it may be necessary to involve Occupational Health or a member of the Health, Safety and Welfare Team
- plan for any potential controls to be introduced – training, equipment and whether to incorporate breaks into the role.

Return to Work Options

- Make use of the Individual Risk Assessment guidance tool.
- Carry out a task analysis of main operations and duties.
- Identify areas where there is a musculoskeletal risk
- For the risks identified, are any further controls necessary to support the employee and the discomfort?
- Implement control measures
- Review control measures and keep situation under review.

Proactive Steps to Reduce Musculoskeletal Discomfort

- Carry out task analysis to identify musculoskeletal risks - Departmental Review – Musculoskeletal Activities
- Introduce good control measures such as – training, purchasing of ergonomic equipment, additional lifting and handling equipment, maintaining equipment, use of proper PPE.
- Ensure that training is attended and proper techniques are adopted through appropriate supervision
- Encourage wellbeing initiatives



Individual Risk Assessment

This assessment to be completed by an manager / assessor in consultation with the individual.

This may trigger the need for more specific task assessments to be carried out. For example, manual handling and ergonomics, working with substances hazardous to health and driving on business.

Return to work assessments should be supported by the Isle of Man Occupational Health Team.

For support in carrying out a more detailed assessment or review, please contact the Health, Safety and Welfare Team by e-mailing: safetyadvice@gov.im

Personal Information	
Name of Employee	
Department and Division	
Location	
Role	
Line Manager	
Name of Assessor	
Date of Initial Assessment	
Nature of health condition	<i>Add brief description of the condition and whether it has been diagnosed by a medical professional.</i>
Is the condition a disability under the Equality Act 2017?	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes/No</p> <p><i>A person is considered disabled if they have a physical impairment which has a long-term (usually lasting more than a year) and substantial effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</i></p>
Is the condition temporary or permanent?	<p>Temporary <i>(Record likely period of disability if known).</i></p> <p>Permanent</p>



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Effects of health condition	
Has professional advice been received about workplace adjustments e.g. by a GP or occupational health practitioner?	Yes/No <i>Record professional advice received about workplace adjustments.</i>
Are there any work activities or situations which the individual must avoid?	
Are adjustments to work activities required as a result of the condition?	Yes/No <i>List work activities below and consider whether an adjustment is required.</i>

Further information and useful resources

IOM Government: <http://edrmgi/sites/HW/SitePages/Active.aspx>

HSE website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm>



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