

1 PURPOSE

To reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders by:

- identifying ergonomic hazards in the design of work systems, products, tasks and environments; and
- providing a framework for assessing the associated risks and implementing effective controls.

2 SCOPE

This requirement applies to staff, students, contractors, and other personnel at all University of Melbourne campuses and each of the University's controlled entities.

3 DEFINITIONS

Ergonomic hazard

An ergonomic hazard is a physical or psychosocial factor in a work system or work environment that can cause biomechanical stress and damage to the human musculoskeletal system.

Ergonomics

The process of designing and/or modifying tools, materials, equipment, plant, workspaces, tasks, jobs, products, systems, and environments to match the physical and mental capabilities and limitations of users, including people with disability and those returning to work following injury or illness. It also involves cognitive processes such as perception, memory, reasoning, decision making and motor response.

Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)

An injury, condition or illness of the musculoskeletal system.

Musculoskeletal system

The anatomical and physiological system of the human body which provides support, form and shape, stability and movement. It includes bones, muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage and spinal discs.

4 REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Prevention

The person(s) that design the work environment and/or design tasks is/are responsible for ensuring that ergonomic hazards relating to work environments, tools, equipment, workstations or work practices are identified and the associated risks are identified, assessed and controlled.

The supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring staff and students are provided with appropriate equipment to enable them to undertake their tasks safely;
- ensuring staff and students have completed relevant training;
- ensuring, where staff have a working from home agreement, that the working from home requirements are followed;
- promoting early reporting of hazards, work-related incidents and musculoskeletal concerns and injuries; and
- consulting with staff, where reasonably practicable, when planning:
 - introduction of new work that may have an impact on health and safety;
 - changes to existing work that may have an impact on health and safety;
 - selection and purchase of new plant and equipment that may have an impact on health and safety; and
 - refurbishment, renovation or redesign of existing workplaces that may have an impact on health and safety.

4.2 Hazard identification

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring processes are in place to identify ergonomic hazards in work systems and the work environment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- reporting hazards as soon as practicable via the Enterprise Risk Management System (ERMS);
- reporting incidents as soon as practicable via ERMS;
- workplace monitoring and scheduled workplace inspections;
- pre-purchase checklists for new plant and equipment;
- ergonomic training (where applicable); and
- workplace ergonomic assessments (for example computer workstation assessments).

4.3 Risk assessment

The supervisor must ensure that identified ergonomic hazards in their area of responsibility are assessed for risk and adequately controlled. The depth/complexity of the risk assessment, will be determined by the nature of the ergonomic hazard. For example, hazardous manual handling may occur due to poor design of work systems. In this example a hazardous manual handling risk assessment could be used.

Risk assessments are entered and stored into the Enterprise Risk Management System (ERMS). A University username and password is required to access ERMS via the Staff Hub or directly from web site: [Enterprise Risk Management System](#).

Hard copy risk assessment forms are available where access to ERMS is not available. These can later be transposed to ERMS.

[Health & Safety: Hazardous manual handling risk assessment form](#)

[Health & Safety: Task risk analysis form](#)

[Health & Safety: General risk assessment form](#)

The form for the Health & Safety: Computer workstation assessment is currently available on the Health & Safety web:

[On campus computer workstation assessment checklist](#)

The form for the Planned working from home computer workstation assessment is currently available on the Health & Safety web:

[Planned working from home computer workstation assessment](#)

For more information and guidance completing a risk assessment refer to the [Health & Safety: Risk assessment methodology](#).

4.4 Training

The Director, Health & Safety shall develop, publish and deliver ergonomic training in accordance with the [Health & Safety: Training requirements](#).

The Head of School/Division must ensure that the required level of information, instruction and training is available to staff and students. The training must provide the skills and knowledge required to perform activities in a manner that is safe and without risks to health, in so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Head of Department/School shall provide resources that record and maintain ergonomic training records in accordance with the Health & Safety: Training requirements.

The supervisor shall:

- identify staff and students who require ergonomic training; and
- arrange for staff and students to undertake ergonomic training.

Where an employee undertakes a Health & Safety: Home-based workstation self-assessment checklist, they must complete the Office Ergonomic training in TrainME.

4.5 Purchasing

When purchasing new plant, equipment or other items that could introduce an ergonomic hazard the supervisor shall in accordance with the [Health & Safety: Purchasing requirements](#):

- complete a pre-purchase checklist or suitable alternative; or
- purchase the plant, equipment, or other items from a preferred supplier.

The supervisor shall ensure that consultation with staff has occurred in accordance with the [Health & Safety: Consultation representation and committee requirements](#).

4.6 Projects and design

During the design of new buildings, structures or building refurbishments, the Executive Director, Project Services or Executive Director, Infrastructure Services (or other person responsible for the requisition of the project) shall ensure that the designer undertakes a risk assessment for all proposed work environments in the building or structure.

The risk assessment should seek to ensure that the building or structure is designed to be safe and without risks to the health of persons using the building or structure as a workplace.

With regards to ergonomics the risk assessment must consider:

- the University's Design Standards;
- the National Construction Code;
- site of buildings or structures;
- systems of work; and
- workplace environment (for example, lighting, ventilation, workplace facilities).

Before commencement of the refurbishment or construction, the Executive Director Project Services or Executive Director, Infrastructure Services (or other person responsible for the project) must ensure that the designer provides evidence of having developed, documented and budgeted for suitable controls for the risks identified in the risk assessment.

5 REFERENCES

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)

The National Construction Code

HB 59-1994 Ergonomics - The human factor - A practical approach to work systems design

The OHS body of knowledge: 16. Work related musculoskeletal disorders 2022

WorkSafe Victoria publications: OfficeWise – A guide to health and Safety in the Office

[Design Standards. Section 2. Health and Safety](#) (University of Melbourne)

[Health & Safety: Training requirements](#)

[Health & Safety: Purchasing requirements](#)

[Health & Safety: Consultation representation and committee requirements](#)

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of School/Division

Director, Health & Safety Executive Director

Project Services Executive Director

Infrastructure Services

Supervisor

Person(s) that design the work environment and/or design tasks

Employees

7 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

7.1 Forms

[On campus computer workstation assessment](#)

[Health & Safety: Hazardous manual handling risk assessment form](#)

[Health & Safety: Task risk analysis form](#)

[Health & Safety: General risk assessment form](#)

[Health & Safety: Pre-purchase checklist](#)

[Planned working from home computer workstation assessment](#)

7.2 Guidance

[Health & Safety: Risk assessment methodology](#)