



## INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE EMPLOYEE SAFETY

### *Subject: Safe Workstations*

Ergonomics has become a watchword in safety, especially in office environments and with computer workstations. The issue of ergonomics is nothing more than being able to adjust the equipment, layout, and other factors associated with your personal work area to conform to the capabilities and anthropometry/biomechanics of the subject person. In other words, fitting the workplace to the individual. We are all made a little differently and we all have slightly different capabilities. The average job description is written for a 27-year old male, right handed, and about 5'10" and 175 pounds. Most of us don't fit that model too well so it is necessary to make some adjustments in our working environments so we can "fit" in.

The first place to start is our workstation which today usually means a computer. We should have adjustable chair (someone needs to show you how it works), articulated keyboard tray with mouse extension, and monitor placed in correct position for tilt and eye relief. These specifications include: chair adjusted so your thighs are parallel with the floor, keyboard tray adjusted so your forearms are parallel with the floor, hands on keyboard in ergonomically "neutral" position (level but not flat), back straight looking into monitor that is angled slightly upward (not more than 15 degrees on average) and placed about 14"-22" inches from your nose to the top of the screen. If you are right-handed, the mouse should be along the right side of the keyboard...and vice-versa for lefties. This is a good starting point. Most people will have to make some adjustments off of these starting positions. Also, keyboard should be provided with a wrist pad. Lighting in your work area should be adequate for your tasks and not glare on any work surface or computer screen. Eye strain can be significant cause

of blurred vision, headaches, and other physical stress factors associated with poor lighting. Lighting should be combination of area and task lighting if designed correctly.

Other factors to consider in your work area include: efficient layout on working surfaces, filing and storage, placement and use of telephone (too many ergonomic problems from people using phone cradles or holding phone in crook of neck – use head set), cords and cables neatly bundled and away from walking or chair movement areas, use of a carpet pad with proper wheels on rolling chair, and basic housekeeping, e.g. trash in the bin and minimize clutter. Each worker should know what to do in an emergency, sounds of the alarms, best exitway out, and outside assembly areas. The district administration needs to complete annual fire evacuation drill as required under the State Code.

One final prevention aspect under this subject: task rotation and stretching. It may not seem that important because a desk job is not considered a physically-demanding activity but you can sustain repetitive motion or cumulative trauma injury at your desk. Good idea to take micro-breaks for any tasks longer than 30-40 minutes or change task activity, say from typing to filing. Also, you may need to stretch – just get up a walk to the water cooler or restroom, or even some minor stretching at your work station.

Be safe and take the time to do it right.