Environmental Health and Safety Statement

Iowa State University strives to be a model for environmental, health and safety excellence in teaching, research, extension, and the management of its facilities. In pursuit of this goal, appropriate policies and procedures must be developed and followed to ensure this community operates in an environment free from recognized hazards. Faculty, staff, and students are responsible for compliance with established policies and are encouraged to encourage practices that ensure safety, protect health, and minimize the institution's impact on the environment.

As an institution of higher learning, Iowa State University
- fosters an understanding of and a responsibility for the environment,
- encourages individuals to be knowledgeable about environmental, health and safety issues that affect their discipline, and
- shares examples of superior environmental health and safety performance with peer institutions, the State of Iowa and the local community.

As a responsible steward of facilities and the environment, Iowa State University
- strives to provide and maintain safe working environments that minimize the risk of injury or illness to employees, students and the public,
- continuously improves operations, with the goal of meeting or exceeding required and applicable environmental, health and safety regulations, rules, policies, or voluntary standards, and
- employs innovative strategies of waste minimization and pollution prevention to reduce the use of toxic substances, promote reuse, and encourage the purchase of renewable, recyclable and recycled materials.

The intent of this statement is to promote environmental stewardship, protect health, and encourage safe work practices within the Iowa State University community. The cooperative efforts of the campus community to remain mindful of these goals will ensure that Iowa State University continues to be a great place to live, work, and learn.

Dr. Steven Leath
President
Directory of Service and Emergency Providers

Services

Environmental Health and Safety
2408 Wanda Daley Drive | (515) 294-5359

Iowa State University Occupational Medicine Department
G11 Technical and Administrative Services Facility (TASF), 2408 Pammel Drive | (515) 294-2056

McFarland Clinic PC, Occupational Medicine
1018 Duff Avenue | (515) 239-4496

Thielen Student Health Center
2647 Union Drive | (515) 294-5801

Emergency

Emergency - Ambulance, Fire, Police
911

Department of Public Safety/ Iowa State University Police
Armory, 2519 Osborn Drive | (515) 294-4428

Mary Greeley Medical Center
1111 Duff Avenue | (515) 239-2011
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What Is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the study of work. The goal of an ergonomics program is to ensure employees can work comfortably with their workplace tools or tasks, thereby decreasing the risk of injury or illness.

Examples of Ergonomic Injuries / Illnesses

The most common types of ergonomic injuries and illnesses are musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). MSDs are injuries/illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, or spinal discs. Employees may suffer ergonomic injuries/illnesses when work tasks include reaching, bending over, lifting heavy objects, using continuous force, working with vibrating equipment, and/or performing repetitive motions.

MSD injuries/illnesses are determined by the part of the body affected. If you suffer an ergonomic injury/illness, your doctor may diagnose one of the following common MSDs:

- carpal tunnel syndrome
- carpet layer’s knee
- De Quervain’s disease
- epicondylitis
- hand-arm vibration syndrome
- herniated spinal disc
- low back pain
- Raynaud’s phenomenon
- rotator cuff syndrome
- sciatica
- tendinitis
- tension neck syndrome
- trigger finger
Signs and Symptoms of an MSD

Employees suffering from MSDs may experience lessened grip strength, decreased range of motion, loss of muscle function, and inability to do everyday tasks. Common symptoms may include:

- back or neck pain
- burning sensation
- fingers or toes turning white
- pain, tingling, or numbness in hands or feet
- pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, or knees
- painful joints
- shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs
- stiffness
- swelling or inflammation

Ergonomics Programs At Iowa State University

As part of a comprehensive health and safety program, the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) offers Iowa State University personnel a variety of ergonomic resources.

Employees can choose from ergonomic workstation evaluations, classroom/online training or online resource information. If you would like to learn more about a particular topic, please visit the EH&S online ergonomics page.

Online information includes ergonomic services available to the Iowa State University community, an eBook for information on various ergonomically related topics and material on ergonomic risk factors. Additional links provide information on lifting and computer workstation concerns.

Worksite Evaluations

EH&S offers ergonomic worksite evaluations for a fee. The purpose of an ergonomic evaluation is to identify occupational injury risk factors and make appropriate recommendations based on current guidelines. To request a worksite evaluation:

- Inform your supervisor about your concerns and that you would like to schedule an evaluation.
Fill out the Ergonomic Questionnaire and submit to EH&S.

Provide an account number. Basic ergonomic evaluations are available for a fee. Refer to the Fee Schedule for pricing.

Call EH&S at (515) 294-5359 to schedule an evaluation.

**Causes of MSDs**

As is the case with many medical conditions, exact causes of MSDs are not always known. Both non-occupational and occupational factors can contribute to the development of MSDs. Work-related MSDs may be caused or exacerbated by exposure to the following risk factors.

**Contact stress**

Pressing the body against a hard or sharp edge can result in placing too much pressure on nerves, tendons and blood vessels. For example, using the palm of your hand as a hammer or resting your arms against a sharp countertop or desk edge can increase your MSD risk.

**Awkward postures**

Posture affects muscle groups that are involved in physical activity. Awkward postures include repeated or prolonged reaching, twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, working overhead with your hands or arms, or holding fixed positions.

**Forceful exertions**

Force is the amount of physical effort required to perform a task (such as heavy lifting) or maintaining control of equipment or tools. The amount of force depends on the type of grip, the weight of an object, body posture, the type of activity, and the duration of the task.

**Repetition**

Repeating the same motions over and over again places stress on muscles and tendons. The severity of risk depends on how often the action is repeated, the speed of the movement, the number of muscles involved and the required force.

**Vibration**

Operating vibrating tools over extended periods of time may lead to nerve damage. Examples of vibrating tools include sanders, grinders, chippers, routers, drills, and saws.
Ergonomic Features to Look For

There are a number of tool characteristics to look for when creating ergonomically-friendly workplace environments. Consider the following when examining your workplace environment.

Keyboard trays

Ideally, an office workstation should have two work heights, one for writing and document viewing and another for optimal keying height (around 30 inches above the floor). Because most new desks have a fixed work surface height of 30 inches, a keyboard tray can be used to create a lower keying height. As with ergonomic chairs (described below), the use of keyboard trays is the responsibility of your department. Contact EH&S at 294-5359, for information on keyboard tray purchase.

Chairs

To accommodate individual body characteristics, consider using a quality ergonomic chair. Desirable ergonomic features to consider when choosing a new desk chair include an adjustable backrest, chair height, seat pan angle and armrests. Other important chair features are discussed in the EH&S’ Ergonomics eBook.

If you are considering buying a new chair, ISU Purchasing at (515) 294-4860 has a number of ergonomic chair models available for purchase and evaluation at the Administrative Services Building (ASB).

Accessory Installation and Furniture Alterations

To schedule ergonomic accessory installation, workstation furniture adjustment and relocation, contact Central Stores at (515) 294-8484.

If your office area will be relocated or requires redesign, submit a Request for Services to FP&M and request that one of their designers assist with the redesign. Design Services can evaluate your work areas and develop an efficient layout for office furniture.

Information and Ergonomics Training

There are a number of resources available for further information and instruction on creating ergonomically-friendly workplace environments. These resources can prove invaluable in creating a better working environment.
Online Training

An online ergonomics training course entitled “Office Ergonomics” is available through Learn@ISU. This course focuses on the prevention of repetitive motion injury, proper workstation configurations and information on computer-related eyestrain. A “Sprains and Strains” classroom course is also available through Learn@ISU.

Work-Related Injuries, Illnesses or Exposures

All personnel seeking treatment for work-related injuries, illnesses or exposures should notify their supervisors as soon as possible.

Medical Emergencies

If injury, illness or exposure necessitates immediate treatment, transport the employee to the Emergency Room at Mary Greeley Medical Center at (515) 239-2011. If emergency transport is needed, dial 911. Be prepared to provide any relevant safety information, such as an SDS. When an employee requires emergency treatment, the incident must be reported to EH&S at (515) 294-5359 as soon as possible. Provide assistance to injured or exposed personnel by following the First Aid Procedures.

Student Accidents and Injuries

Students not employed by Iowa State University who are exposed or injured in the classroom or laboratory should seek medical attention at the Thielens Student Health Center (2647 Union Drive, (515) 294-5801). All accidents and injuries sustained by Iowa State University students, while in academic classes or events sponsored by the university, must be reported to Risk Management by the student and a university representative using the Student Accident Report Form. Refer to the Accidents and Injuries web page for more information.

Exposure Monitoring

As part of the workplace exposure assessment, noise and chemical exposure monitoring may be performed by EH&S to quantify the level of exposure experienced by employees at Iowa State University. Monitoring results are used to determine if medical surveillance of an employee will be required and whether control measures should be implemented to ensure a safe work environment. Each department and supervisor is responsible for ensuring that any recommended control measures are implemented. EH&S may perform additional monitoring to determine the effectiveness of control measures.
EH&S is available to conduct occupational exposure monitoring whenever a possible exposure or potential health hazard is suspected in the work environment.

**Reporting**

All work related injuries, illnesses, or exposures must be reported to the employee’s supervisor, even when medical attention is not required or is refused by the employee:

A First Report of Injury must be completed through AccessPlus and submitted within 24 hours of the incident. The employee or supervisor may complete the FROI, but supervisors must review, approve and electronically submit the FROI. Supervisors will be prompted to fill out information relating to the Accident Investigation as part of the FROI process. The online questionnaire is listed as Work Injury under the Employee tab once logged into AccessPlus. Questions regarding the form may be forwarded to Human Resource Services at (515) 294-3753.

Refer to the [Accidents and Injuries web page](#) for more information.

**OSHA Ergonomic Regulations**

There are no Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations on ergonomics at this time. However, ergonomic hazards must still be addressed in the workplace. Under Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, OSHA requires that Iowa State University furnish to each employee a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to its employees.
University Nondiscrimination Statement

“Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Office of Equal Opportunity, 3350 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, Tel. 515 294-7612, email eooffice@iastate.edu”