

Housekeeping Ergonomics Training for Supervisors

The Hotel Housekeeping Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention standard went into effect on July 1, 2018. Under the standard, each covered employer is required to establish and maintain a written Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program (MIPP) that directly addresses the hazards that are specific to housekeeping operations. Training specific to musculoskeletal hazards must be implemented when the MIPP is first established to all applicable employees, to new hires, to all housekeepers given new job assignments, when new equipment or practices are introduced, and on an annual basis.

Supervisors Duties in Relation to MIPP

The duties of all supervisors include:

- Attending ergonomics training to gain familiarity with the elements of the program, recognition and control of work related ergonomics risk factors, signs and symptoms of work related musculoskeletal injuries, early reporting requirements and procedures, and medical management.
- Ensuring that employees have received the appropriate training
- Providing employees with and use the appropriate tools, equipment, parts, and materials in accordance with ergonomic requirements
- Facilitating employees' understanding of the MSD signs and symptoms, and early reporting system
- Responding promptly to employee reports
- Providing appropriate workers compensation documentation to employees as required
- Administering return-to-work directives from the health care provider
- Maintaining clear communication with managers and employees

Housekeeping Common Ergonomic Injury Causes

- Repetitive motion activities
- Lifting or pushing heavy objects
- Bending, twisting, forceful exertions
- Reaching and awkward postures
- Standing for long periods of time
- Lack of rest and stretching

Symptoms of Cumulative Trauma Injuries

It is important to address ergonomic related injuries with your staff immediately.

By addressing these issues, you can help prevent future injuries, improve overall safety efforts, and potentially stop an injury from getting worse. Know how to identify the symptoms of a cumulative trauma injury and encourage employees to report these symptoms immediately.

Cumulative Trauma Injury symptoms include:

- Chronic/nagging pain and tenderness
- Fatigue and muscle weakness
- Stiffness and reduced flexibility in joints
- Numb extremities

Housekeeping Ergonomics Training for Supervisors

Benefits of Ergonomic Improvements

Ergonomic Injuries are typically costly and are long term nagging injuries. There are several benefits to improving your ergonomic safety efforts for your employees in addition to lost time at work, including:

- Improved work quality and efficiency
- Reduced the risk of injury and pain
- Working smarter rather than "working harder"

Improving Housekeeping Ergonomics

Work Methods

- Encourage sound postures and team lifts when employees are changing and lifting mattresses, tucking sheets and other heaving lifting and pulling activities (Conduct lifting training)
- When vacuuming, ensure workers align the vacuum with their body, alternate hands while vacuuming, set the handle to the appropriate height, empty bag on a frequent basis
- When working with carts, train employees to keep the cart aligned with their body, maintain the majority of weight between hips and chest, always use two hands, make sure wheels are aligned before moving, empty all trash and keep loads as light as possible
- When cleaning bathrooms train workers to stand in tub if possible and use slip-resistant surface, conduct work at waist level and directly in front of them, avoid carrying heavy loads and make more trips instead, keep walking surfaces dry and don't allow work in wet floor conditions, alternate hands and arms when cleaning surfaces
- When dusting, make sure workers use extended handles, choose handles that are light, use products such as microfiber to reduce injury potential
- Alternate workers' tasks as often as possible, encourage employees to take routine breaks, and stretch before and after work shifts

Team Cleaning:

Working together can have several benefits, including: reduce risk of strains from team lifting, improved supervision and accountability, improved responsibility for health and safety, proactive approach in improving safety efforts, improved communication in relation to safety, proven to improve work quality and productivity, reduced labor and equipment costs.

Equipment

- Bed making tools instead of manual sheet tucking
- Larger and harder wheels on carts, motorized carts. Replace worn wheels
- Lighter weight vacuums, self-propelled, brush assist, ergonomic handles, backpack vacuums
- Long-handled brushes and scrubbers, brushes with comfortable grips
- Extended handles on dusting products, and light weight microfiber equipment
- Conduct maintenance or replace broken vacuums and carts to improve performance and ease of work

Room Design

In order to reduce injury potential and awkward postures while cleaning, consider the room design and layout. Analyze how room features could make housekeeping efforts easier. Common issues are tight spaces to pass, placement of desks and chairs that cause housekeepers to reach/bend/twist, items that need to be frequently moved by housekeeping, etc.

By making loss control visit(s), evaluations and/ or recommendations, or providing safety materials, Berkshire Hathaway Homestate Companies and this Consultant have not and do not undertake or assume any duty to you or anyone else, including but not limited to: A) Identifying or reporting upon any hazard at your premises; B) Managing, controlling, or correcting any hazard; or C) Enforcing compliance with any local, state, or federal safety or health law. Our recommendations or safety materials may not address every possible loss potential, code violation, or exception to neither good practice nor will compliance with any submitted recommendations guarantee the fulfillment of your obligations as required by any local, state, or federal laws. Loss Control is your management's daily responsibility. You are urged to implement and maintain your safety and health management programs.

Please contact the Loss Control team at:
losscontrol@bhhc.com for any further questions.