Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

Bovis Homes

The main focus of our work is on health and safety issues related to pain and disorders caused by the work a person does, whether this occurs in neck shoulders and arms (Upper Limbs), back, or hips knees and ankles and feet (Lower Limbs). These pages also look into manual handling and the impact of using display screen equipment.

Key messages about MSDs are:

- you can do things to prevent or minimise MSDs
- the prevention measures are cost effective
- you cannot prevent all MSDs, so early reporting of symptoms, proper treatment and suitable rehabilitation is essential.

Risk factors causing MSDs can be found in virtually every workplace from commerce to agriculture, health services to construction. An estimated 11.6 million working days a year are lost to work-related MSDs.

Back pain

Most people have back pain at some time. Usually the pain is not caused by anything serious and it settles within a matter of days or weeks.

Medical evidence from the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine focuses on three key messages for sufferers to deal with back pain: -

- Stay active
- Try simple pain relief
- If you need it seek advice

For some real life examples, go to the **'case studies'** **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/experience.htm** section of the HSE website to see what others have done to reduce the incidence of back pain at work and how organisations have worked to rehabilitate sufferers and get them back at work.

For information to help employers, managers and employees prevent and manage the effects of back pain in the workplace visit the **back pain section**. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/backpain/index.htm**

Upper limb disorders (ULDs)

The term Upper Limb Disorders (ULDs) includes the condition known as "repetitive strain injury" (RSI), these two terms are not interchangeable because RSI does not cover all upper limb disorders. ULD is used as an umbrella term for a range of disorders of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder and neck. It covers those conditions, with specific medical diagnoses (e.g. frozen shoulder, carpal tunnel syndrome), and other conditions (often called RSI) where there is pain without specific symptoms. Symptoms may include pain, swelling and difficulty moving.

ULD cases caused by work can also mean production losses and compensation claims for employers.

For information to help employers, managers and employees prevent and manage the effects of ULDs in the workplace visit the **ULD section**. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/uld/index.htm**

Lower Limb Disorders (LLDs)

Lower Limb Disorder (LLD) is used as an umbrella term for a range of disorders of the hips, legs, knees, ankles and feet. It covers those conditions with specific medical diagnoses (e.g. Osteoarthritis of the knee and hip), and other conditions where there is pain without specific symptoms. Symptoms may include pain, swelling and difficulty moving.

About 20% of all work-related musculoskeletal disorders affect the lower limbs. In 2009/10 an estimated 94,000 people in Great Britain who had worked in the last 12 months suffered from an LLD caused or made worse by their work. It is estimated that these workers took an average of 25 days off work.

One piece of research suggested that 50% of cases of surgically treated knee Osteoarthritis and 30% of surgically treated hip Osteoarthritis were related to occupational factors.

For information to help employers, managers and employees prevent and manage the effects of LLDs in the workplace visit the **LLD section**. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/lld/index.htm**

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

DSE includes all the potential issues that may result from using Display Screen Equipment, which used to be referred to as VDUs (Visual Display Units) and includes use of computer equipment in both the workplace and at home if you are a home-worker. ULDs, headaches and visual problems can all be associated with working at a poorly designed workstations.

For information to help employers, managers and employees prevent and manage the effects of risks of working with DSE visit the **DSE section**. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/index.htm**

Manual handling

Manual handling covers a wide variety of tasks including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying. Injuries can occur almost anywhere, when people are at work or at home, and for many reasons like heavy loads, awkward postures. In addition, previous or existing injury can increase the risk.

If any of these tasks are not carried out safely then there is a risk of injury. More than a third of all reported workplace injuries which result in someone being off work for more than 3 days are caused by manual handling.

Early reporting of symptoms, proper treatment and suitable return to work plans can help most people recover from their injuries and return to employment. However a few individuals may need to take longer periods off work and possibly even leave work entirely. The injured person may find that their lifestyle, leisure activities, ability to sleep and job prospects are affected.

Work related manual handling injuries can have serious implications for the employer too they may have to bear substantial costs, for example for retraining, wages, overtime and civil liability.

For information to help employers, managers and employees prevent and manage the effects of risks of manual handling in the workplace visit the **Manual Handling section**. **http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manualhandling.htm**

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