



# FYI



## PLEASE POST – for BCGEU members at the B.C. Liquor Distribution Branch

### June 2021 Safety Tip: Ergonomics

Our work requires moving or lifting loads, extended repetitive motion, and awkward movements (reaching, bending, twisting). The nature of our work leaves us at increased risk for musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs).

MSIs are injuries or disorders of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue including sprains, strains and inflammation, which **may be caused or aggravated by work.**

There are five factors that contribute to the risk of developing an MSI at work:

1. **Force** – the force exerted by a worker on a load. Lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, gripping.
2. **Repetition** – using the same body part over and over again to perform a task puts workers at risk of MSI.
3. **Duration** – The longer the task where the risk factor is performed, the higher the risk of MSI.
4. **Work Postures** – A neutral body posture is where your body has no outside influences and is in a standing relaxed state. Awkward positions force the muscles to work harder.
5. **Local Contact Stresses** – Where the worker comes into contact with a hard surface (kneeling, leaning, extended tool use).

While it is ultimately up to our employer, in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee, to identify, assess, control, educate/train and evaluate the effectiveness of their plan to minimize the risk of MSIs, there are **some concrete steps we can all take during the day to make sure we are looking after our**



## **own bodies at work.**

Take an ergonomic approach to our work. This means ***making the work fit the worker***, not the other way around.

At the start of your paid shift (not before!), make sure you **give yourself enough time to:**

- **Do a proper pre-operation equipment inspection, including sanitizing all surfaces.**
- **Do basic stretches to prepare your body for the demands of the day.**

During your paid shift, you should also make sure you **allocate enough time to:**

- **Take short pauses or micro-breaks for muscle rest and recovery.**
- **Periodically stretch your muscles involved in the task.**

For answers about ergonomic safety in your workplace, please contact your OHS committee, OHS rep or local steward. If you have OHS concerns or would like to become an OHS rep, please contact us at [ohs@bcgeu.ca](mailto:ohs@bcgeu.ca). You can find us online at <http://ohs.bcgeu.ca>

For more detailed information on your rights as a worker and the responsibility of your employer, see the following WorkSafeBC documents:

[Understanding and Preventing MSIs](#)

[Preventing MSI](#)

In solidarity,

BCGEU Component 5 (Retail Stores and Warehouse) Occupational Health and Safety Committee

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