



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

University Environmental Health and Safety

Ergonomics Program

December 2, 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Indiana University Environmental Health and Safety (IUEHS) has developed this Program to proactively prevent or reduce work-related ergonomic injuries.

1.2. Scope

The Ergonomics Program applies to all Indiana University employees and all related jobs and job tasks.

2. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

2.1. University Environmental Health and Safety (IUEHS) is responsible for:

- 2.1.1. Developing and coordinating the implementation of the overall Ergonomics Program;
- 2.1.2. Serving as the primary resource for ergonomic guidance and related best work practices;
- 2.1.3. Conducting ergonomic evaluations for University employees upon request and providing recommendations to minimize ergonomic hazards if applicable;
- 2.1.4. Providing recommendations, as requested or deemed necessary by IUEHS, to applicable University departments regarding tool, furniture, and equipment selection; and
- 2.1.5. Providing ergonomic-related information (e.g. how to identify risk factors, proper workstation setup, safe lifting technique, etc.) to employees through training and education.

2.2. Departments are responsible for:

- 2.2.1. Taking appropriate corrective action to mitigate ergonomic hazards;
- 2.2.2. Providing employees with human assistance or lift assisting devices as necessary;
- 2.2.3. Permitting employees to request and participate in ergonomic evaluations conducted by IUEHS.

2.3. Supervisors are responsible for:

- 2.3.1. Educating employees to report ergonomic hazards and injuries; and
- 2.3.2. Encouraging employees to complete ergonomics training provided by IUEHS.

2.4. Employees are responsible for:

- 2.4.1. Reporting ergonomic hazards to their supervisor;
- 2.4.2. Utilizing safe lifting techniques when carrying or moving objects;
- 2.4.3. Reporting work-related injuries to their supervisor in accordance with the applicable University Human Resources (UHR) [Injury On-the-Job Policy](#); and
- 2.4.4. Cooperating with IUEHS during ergonomic evaluations and/or injury investigations.

3. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

3.1. Evaluation and Control

3.1.1. *Self-Evaluation*

Employees are encouraged to evaluate their workstation and/or job tasks using guidance provided on the [IUEHS ergonomics webpage](#). If additional help is needed, employees may request an ergonomic evaluation by contacting IUEHS for their respective campus.

3.1.2. *Safe Lifting*

Consider the following when planning or performing manual lifting:

1. Wear supportive shoes when lifting. Examples of unsupportive shoes include high heels, sandals, flip-flops, etc.;
2. Size up the load, its weight, shape and position, and decide on the route and destination for the object prior to lifting;
3. Human or mechanical assistance (e.g. team lifting, hand trucks, carts, dollies, forklifts, hoists and wheelbarrows) should be used when carrying or moving heavy objects greater than 50 pounds or when an object is too large, awkward, or difficult to lift or move alone;
4. If possible, reduce the size or weight of heavy or awkward objects by dividing the material or objects into more containers or pieces;
5. Lifting belts or back belts shall not be used as personal protective equipment (PPE) for the purpose of preventing or reducing the risk of injury among uninjured employees. This requirement is based upon guidance specified by the [National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\) Publication Number 94-127](#);
6. Avoid carrying objects that obscure potential tripping hazards from view; and
7. Utilize safe lifting techniques. See the training section of this Program for more information regarding training and educational resources related to safe lifting.

3.1.3. *Ergonomic Evaluation*

Upon request, IUEHS will conduct an ergonomic evaluation that may include an assessment of proper workstation setup, ergonomic equipment, the work environment, the rate and repetition of job tasks, and/or other work-related practices that may impact employee comfort or the likelihood of an ergonomic injury. If applicable, IUEHS will provide recommendations to minimize ergonomic hazards.

3.1.4. *Prevention and Control*

Departments shall implement feasible methods to mitigate ergonomic hazards. When correcting ergonomic hazards, departments shall prioritize controls or corrective actions in the following order:

1. Engineering Controls: Implementation of a physical change to the workstation, tools, and/or machinery that eliminate/reduce the hazard of the job/task. Examples include using a device to lift heavy objects, repositioning tables, and redesigning tools;
2. Administrative Controls: Changes made to regulate exposure without making physical changes to the area or process. Examples include employee breaks and job rotation;

3. Work Practice Controls: Safe procedures and techniques such as proper lifting techniques, proper use of tools, and correct use of ergonomic equipment; and
4. Personal protective equipment (PPE): Protection to reduce exposure to ergonomic-related risk factors such as: padded surfaces and thermal gloves.

3.1.5. *Ergonomic Office Equipment*

When University standards exist for specific furniture or equipment (e.g. chairs, sit-stand stations, keyboard trays, etc.), departments shall not purchase or acquire non-standard or restricted items without consulting with IUEHS and other applicable departments such as the University Architects Office (UAO) and Indiana University Purchasing.

3.2. Ergonomic Injuries/Illnesses

3.2.1. *Injury/Illness Investigation*

Employees shall report signs and symptoms of ergonomic-related injuries/illnesses to their supervisor. Ergonomic-related injuries/illnesses will be investigated by IUEHS in accordance with the **Occupational Injury and Illness Investigation Program**. In addition, IUEHS may conduct a mandatory ergonomic evaluation in response to reported ergonomic-related injuries/illnesses.

3.2.2. *Medical Treatment*

Employees who experience signs and symptoms of an ergonomic injury/illness shall follow all applicable UHR [Injury On-the-Job Policies](#) for reporting work-related injuries and illnesses and seek medical attention, as necessary.

4. TRAINING & RECORDKEEPING

4.1.1. *Training*

Educational resources and training related to ergonomics and safe lifting can be viewed on the **IUEHS ergonomics webpage**. Special ergonomic classroom training sessions may also be requested for large groups. Training is non-mandatory unless specified within the recommendations of an IUEHS incident investigation report or IUEHS ergonomic evaluation report.

4.1.2. *Recordkeeping*

Training records for ergonomic-related training provided by IUEHS will be maintained for a period of at least 5 years.

5. REFERENCES

IUEHS Ergonomics Webpage

IUEHS Occupational Injury and Illness Investigation Program

[NIOSH BACK BELTS – Do They Prevent Injury \(NIOSH Publication Number 94-127\)](#)

6. REVISIONS

New Document: 12/2/2015