

# Saint Joseph's College

## Policy Guidebook

### Human Resources

**Section Name:** Environmental Health and Safety

**Section Number:** 10.04

**Effective Date:** 1/1/2022

**SUBJECT:** Ergonomics

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#### **Purpose:**

Saint Joseph's College is invested in providing a safe work environment for all employees. This includes workplace safety in the area of ergonomics.

The purpose of an ergonomics program to minimize Musculo-Skeletal Disorders (MSDs) in the workplace. MSD's are injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, and spinal discs. These may cause pain or discomfort in the back, neck, wrist, hips, and other joints. The primary elements of this ergonomics program include:

1. worksite evaluations
2. control of exposures that may have caused musculo-skeletal disorders
3. ergonomics training of employees.

The ergonomics training focuses on educating employees on the causes of musculo-skeletal injuries, the employee's personal responsibility to apply good work habits (such as posture and body mechanics) and adequate fitness for work.

Every reasonable and timely effort will be made to eliminate or minimize exposures. In determining how to correct or minimize exposures, Saint Joseph's College will consider reasonable, cost-effective engineering or administrative controls.

#### **Applicable to:**

All Employees

#### **Policy:**

All employees are responsible for workplace safety. This includes ergonomics and the proper workstation design/setup based upon the individual.

Employees are encouraged to immediately report all suspected MSDs, MSD symptoms, or other ergonomic concerns to the SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator. This includes all workplace MSDs as soon as possible, including if they have been identified and diagnosed by a licensed physician. Some equipment will require medical documentation from your health care provider prior to ordering equipment. (Example: Sit Stand Stations)

MSDs are best treated promptly and may worsen if left untreated for long periods of time. Managers and Department Chairs are responsible for providing work stations for their employees and planning for the replacement of equipment as it ages or is damaged through normal use. Employees are responsible for reporting workstation concerns and submitting Incident Reports if they experience symptoms of soft tissue injuries. The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator is responsible for performing basic assessments, recommending corrective actions, maintaining up-to-date knowledge of available alternatives, and recommending additional resources for assessment or evaluation as needed.

It is expected that employees will be active participants in workplace safety and will adhere to the recommended changes to their workplace station. Changing habits, posture, and behavior can be challenging. In order for employees to minimize the risk of injury, they will need to take part in the process even though it may initially feel like an uncomfortable change.

**Procedure:**

The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator will provide an ergonomic assessment upon request from an employee. Managers may request an assessment for new employees following the delivery and setup of workstation equipment, but an assessment or reassessment may be requested at any time. The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator will explain basic ergonomic principles and work with employees to reduce the impact of repetitive motion injuries by assisting with adjustments to equipment, suggesting alternatives and recommendations based on knowledge of ergonomics and the tools and equipment that are available. The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator may utilize outside resources in evaluations if there are circumstances beyond the evaluator's training and experience. Outside resources may include insurance company ergonomists or medical practitioners with appropriate expertise.

The procedure is as follows:

- An employee will complete an Ergonomics Assessment Request form provided by The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator.
- The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator will arrange a workstation visit within approximately 5 business days
- The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator will assess the workstation, have an interactive dialogue with the employee, make recommendations, and document the findings
  - If workstation height adjustments are needed, the adjustments may be completed at the time of the assessment.
  - If it is determined that ergonomic equipment (furniture, technology) is the only solution, the employee's respective department will be responsible for the cost of the equipment. As a reminder, the equipment is property of the College, not the employee.

- A follow up ergonomic assessment will occur within eight weeks after any adjustment is made.
- It is the responsibility of the employee to be an active participant in the process and to maintain the recommended changes.
- It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure the employee is adhering to the recommendations provided by The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator.

For employees who are Telecommuting, a Work at Home Evaluations are available: A packet will be emailed to you by the SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator. You will be required to complete an Ergonomics Assessment Request form and provide 5-6 photos at different angles of you "Working" at your home station. This will give the evaluator a basis to make adjustments. The SJC Certified Ergonomic Evaluator will then suggest modifications to your home station based on the information provided. After adjustments have been made, the evaluator will follow up with you within 8 weeks of adjustments to ensure you are seeing positive results.