

CDOIF

Chemical and Downstream
Oil Industries Forum

CDOIF Guidance. **Musculoskeletal Disorders in the workplace: Practical advice to help managers and supervisors identify the causes of MSD's and take action to address any issues**

Manual Handling

Manual handling can be a common aspect of tasks across many sectors, particularly in physically demanding work often found in the chemical industry. However, poorly managed manual handling can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), including back injuries and repetitive strain injuries.

Hand Arm Vibration

Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is a serious and preventable condition caused by regular use of hand-held vibrating tools. In the chemical industry, tasks such as maintenance work, pipefitting, cleaning using high-pressure equipment, and use of powered tools for fabrication or repair pose specific risks.

HAVS symptoms can significantly impact the daily lives of affected individuals and their ability to safely carry out their work.



Display Screen Equipment

Display Screen Equipment or DSE as it is often commonly referred to, covers fixed and portable devices, which includes laptops, personal tablet computers, mobile phones and other handheld equipment etc, in use by staff for work purposes only.

Most employees will at some stage interact with DSE, be that via a control panel for operating machinery through to desk-based computers and mobile devices.

ERGONOMICS

Ergonomics is the 'fit' between people and their work. It puts people first, taking account of their capabilities and limitations.

The physical and psychological abilities of a workforce need to be considered in designing the plant and equipment they use, and the tasks they perform. Assessing people's abilities and limitations, their jobs and tasks, equipment and working environment and their interactions, contribute to the design of safe, effective and productive work systems.

Health Issues

Musculoskeletal disorders can cause new or aggravate pre-existing health conditions associated with the physical body and how it operates. These can range from acute and short-term strains and sprains of soft tissue such as muscles, ligaments and even nerves, through to more chronic and long-term ailments that involve the skeletal framework.

This CDOIF guidance on Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's), sets out the primary causes of MSDs, and provides simple advice for businesses on how to understand and take steps towards effectively managing MSD's in the workplace.

The guidance uses plain language and refers to practical approaches that reflect good practice. It is not intended as a detailed guide to your legal duties although it refers to legal and moral obligations. It aims to help you identify where MSD's are or may become an issue in your workplace and suggests solutions to help you effectively manage the impact of MSDs on your workers and its impact on your business.

Across industry and commerce, there are over half a million cases of MSDs at any one time, resulting in an average of 16 working days lost per case. Of these just under 200,000 are new each year. Work-related MSDs represent about 40% of all work-related ill-health cases and over 30% of all associated working days lost.

The information set out in the five guidance notes is based on five key contributors to Musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace as shown in the diagram. These are:

- Display Screen Equipment [DSE]
- Health Issues
- Ergonomics
- Hand Arm Vibration [HAV]
- Manual Handling

Each concise guidance note follows the same format based on a question-and-answer approach. There are five key questions to ask yourself:

- What is the issue? (*Brief explanation of the topic*)
- Why should you be concerned about it?
- How do you know if there is a problem?
- What should or could you be doing?
- How can you do it?

The guidance also provides links to further information, guidance and legislation to support you.