



Ergonomic Services

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), such as carpal tunnel syndrome, represent the largest occupational injury and illness problem in the United States today. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates that MSDs effects 1.8 million workers a year, and account for one third of lost day injuries; costing US employers as much as \$54 billion annually. These injuries often occur when there is a mismatch between the worker, work, and workstation.

FOH will work in partnership with your agency to find the most effective way to prevent MSDs and address workplace injury risk factors, thereby keeping your employees healthy and on the job.

FOH is a non-appropriated agency that provides occupational health and wellness services exclusively to federal employees. FOH was created by Congress in 1946 by an amendment to the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.), and is a service unit within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Program Support Center. Our mission is to improve the health, safety, and productivity of the federal workforce.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, medical expenses and worker's compensation costs will continue to rise unless there is a conscientious effort made to implement ergonomic solutions. As the costs of MSDs continue to increase, Federal agencies have a growing need for ergonomic services such as those offered by Federal Occupational Health (FOH).

Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker; matching the physical requirements of the job with the physical capacity of the worker to enhance productivity and minimize or prevent costly injuries. FOH's multidisciplinary approach brings together its Ergonomic, Environmental Health, Employee Assistance, and Clinical Services to meet your unique needs. One of the greatest myths about ergonomic solutions is that it is expensive. In fact, many solutions are simple ones involving changes in work practices and modifications to how a job is performed. Even workstation modifications may only incur a moderate expense and will provide a return of investment in improved employee safety and health and increased productivity.

FOH's comprehensive Ergonomics Program can provide any or all of the following elements:

Program Development

Experienced and credentialed FOH ergonomic consultants will help develop an agency ergonomics program that include:

- Consultation the selection and procurement of workstation equipment and furniture
- Individual workstation evaluations
- Training seminars, including online training options
- Assistance with reasonable accommodation requests and return to work issues
- Recommendations for space planning and appropriate workstation and computer set ups including keyboard, and other input device options

- Conversion of job descriptions to functional job requirements that identify physical demands of the job tasks
- Recommendations for overall compliance with OSHA’s ergonomics guidelines including assistance in developing written policy, hazard reporting, job analysis, training requirements, and management procedures

Individual Ergonomic Assessments

Individual Ergonomics Assessments analyze work practices and job task requirements as well as determine whether employee workstations are designed to maximize productivity while minimizing the risk of injury. FOH provides comprehensive solution-oriented report that identifies risk factors, worker-task mismatches, and any other related issues. FOH will also provide specific short- and long-term recommendations for identified problems.

Agency Ergonomic Assessments

Our consultants will review injury data and determine if any injuries have an ergonomic origin. Based on a comprehensive assessment, we will identify other employees at risk and provide functional recommendations (engineering, administrative, and/or work practice controls) to minimize or eliminate identified risk factors.

Training and Education Programs

FOH will teach managers and employees about ergonomics and how it is used to prevent or minimize the occupational hazards associated with MSDs. All programs are interactive, intervention focused, and customized. Handouts, reference materials, and participant evaluations are provided. FOH offers:

- Web-based, interactive office ergonomics assessments
- Individual or group training seminars
- “Train-the-Trainer” programs
- Ergonomics articles for agency newsletters

Workplace Design Consultations

We will work with your agency to ensure that key ergonomic principles and practices are incorporated into the design of work environments and the selection of furniture and equipment. Our recommendations take into account job categories, specific physical space requirements, employee needs, demographic characteristics, as well as agency budgets.

Reasonable Accommodation Consultations

FOH can assist you in both evaluating the appropriateness of accommodation requests while meeting the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act (*the applicable Federal sector counterpart to the Americans with Disabilities Act*). Following a comprehensive assessment, written recommendations will address workplace modifications, work process changes, adaptive devices, and other measures to enable the disabled employee to perform the essential functions of the job.

Return to Work

Our experts will work with medical and human resource staff to identify appropriate “limited and light duty” jobs and/or suggest job modifications to enable employees to return to work after sustaining an injury or experiencing a significant illness.

FOH, the Occupational Health Provider of Choice for the Federal Government

The mission of FOH is to improve the health, safety, and productivity of the federal workforce. Created by Congress in 1946, FOH is a non-appropriated service agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Program Support Center.

Federal agencies throughout the U.S. and overseas can access FOH services. FOH provides worksite health services, Wellness/Fitness, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), Work/Life, Environmental Health and Safety, Organizational and Professional Development, and Training and Education.

Make Federal Occupational Health your partner in building a healthier, more productive work force. For more information, please visit us at www.foh.dhhs.gov or call us today at **1-800-457-9808**.