

Berkley Life Sciences Ergonomic Solutions

Why does ergonomics affect all life science employees?

Ergonomics impact all employee levels of a life sciences company from manufacturing workers to lab technicians to office staff. Why? In almost every job, there is risk for repetitive motion or an awkward position during a task. For example, a manufacturing employee could be packaging dietary supplements at a height that is not adjustable, and therefore uncomfortable, to them. Or a lab technician has to stand and pipet all day at a lab bench with no anti-fatigue mats.

Understanding repetitive motion risks and how they impact your employees can help you manage the ergonomics exposure for your company. The impacts of these exposures can affect your bottom line, from monetary costs to employee productivity and motivation. Employees can tell when a company considers their wellbeing and when they see little concern, employees may be less productive. Another possible impact is injuries occurring from ergonomic exposures. Ergonomic injuries can have both direct and indirect costs. Medical costs may need to be covered and recommended ergonomic equipment purchased. In addition, production loss and staff time to fill in for injured workers must be taken into account. An ergonomics program is one way for an employer to show that they care for their employees and to manage the ergonomic exposures that your company has identified.

An ergonomics program can help manage these exposures, protect employees and financial resources, and guard against liabilities. An ergonomics program also sets expectations for employees. Some of the components of a solid ergonomics program include:

1. Management commitment and written policy
2. Workstation set up and evaluation
3. Appropriate furniture and equipment for all areas – office, lab, and manufacturing
4. Accident reporting, investigation and follow up
5. Employee training on the ergonomics program
6. Available employee stretching programs



The benefits of an ergonomics program are to keep employees happy, healthy, injury free, educated, motivated and productive.

What can Berkley Life Sciences do for ergonomics at your company?

Berkley Life Sciences is dedicated to providing resources to your company that will assist you in mitigating your exposure to ergonomic or repetitive motion injuries. These resources currently include conducting ergonomic assessments for complicated cases and an ergonomics train-the-trainer course to provide the knowledge onsite at your company. But from our own analysis of ergonomic trends, exposures and the current solutions to these in the life sciences space, we realized that more could be offered. So, we are excited to share with you our new online resource for life sciences companies, in particular our worker's compensation policyholders that we have developed. This platform leverages current technology with the latest knowledge within the life sciences ergonomic space.

The Berkley Life Sciences Ergonomic Solutions online training portal is where employees can learn about ergonomics at their own computers at their own pace, without disrupting their work. This portal was designed as a preventative tool for companies to use before an employee has to file a worker's compensation claim. It provides individual access for your employees to understand how they can best mitigate their exposure to repetitive motion injuries. This resource can be accessed through the following link on our website: <http://www.berkleys.com/exclusive-resources/risk-management/>.

The advantages of an online resource are numerous: it is less disruptive, cost effective, and efficient and can be applied to meet your specific needs. However, at Berkley Life Sciences we also understand that there are cases out there that are not best addressed by an online system. We can also provide additional resources needed to meet your particular needs. If you would like to get in touch with Berkley Life Sciences, please contact us at blsrmr@berkleys.com.



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Sonia Weiss has over 10 years of experience working in the environmental, health and safety ('EHS') professions, specializing in providing EHS services and advice to the academia, manufacturing, and biotechnology sectors. At Berkley Life Sciences, her focus is on helping her life science clients understand and manage their overall risk. Prior to joining Berkley Life Sciences in 2013, Ms. Weiss was the Safety Health and Environmental (SHE) Manager for Genencor, where she was responsible for workplace safety, regulatory compliance, risk assessments, and industrial hygiene. Ms. Weiss has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biochemistry and Environmental Sciences from Northwestern University, a Master in Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master in Business Administration from Presidio Graduate School.

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