UMBC OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (ESH) PROCEDURE	**TITLE:** **ERGONOMICS PROGRAM**
DATE CREATED: **5/2023**	**REVISION: 1.0**

I. PURPOSE

This procedure is designed to promote the health and safety of University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) employees through the evaluation, identification, and control of ergonomic hazards in the workplace.

II. SCOPE

Applies to all UMBC employees, including student employees, faculty, and staff.

III. PROCEDURE

Introduction

Ergonomics is an applied science that is concerned with designing and arranging the equipment and tools that people use, so that the people can interact with their tools and equipment safely and efficiently. In other words, ergonomics focuses on fitting the task to the person, rather than forcing the person to fit themselves to the task.

Ergonomic risk factors that are not appropriately controlled can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). Often these occur over a long period of time and through the accumulation of cumulative trauma to the body. MSDs can be potentially life-altering and severely impact one's quality of life. Proper ergonomics is critical to a healthy, safe, and efficient workplace, whether it is in an office environment, a lab, a warehouse, or any other setting.

Ergonomic Risk Factors

Below is a list of common ergonomic risk factors that can contribute to MSDs.

- Frequent bending or twisting of the back or neck.
- Heavy, awkward or repetitive lifting, pushing or pulling.

- Tasks requiring lifting either below the knees or above the shoulder.
- Static postures - spending long periods without movement of a particular body part. This could include sitting, standing, bending, crouching, etc.
- Working with arms above shoulder height, elbows away from the body, or reaching behind the body.
- Repetitive or prolonged grasping and holding of objects, gripping with the wrist or elbow in an awkward position, or repetitive bending or twisting of the wrists or elbows.
- Frequent exposure to whole-body or hand-arm vibration that has not been controlled.
- Work surfaces that require elevation of the shoulders or stooping of the back for long periods.
- Contact stress, where force is concentrated on a small area of the body. A common example is a wrist or arm resting against a hard edged surface, like the edge of a desk or counter top.
- Using any part of the body, especially your hand, as a hammer or mallet.
- Inadequate or excessive light or glare.

Workplace Ergonomic Evaluations

It is the goal of the Environmental Safety and Health (ESH) department and UMBC to promote a healthy and safe work environment that is free from recognized ergonomic hazards. To achieve this goal, ergonomic hazards must be identified so that appropriate control measures can be implemented.

If an employee has concerns regarding the ergonomics of their work area, or if they are experiencing ergonomic discomfort at their workstation, they should notify their manager and complete an Ergonomic Survey Request Form on the UMBC ESH Department website (https://umbc-esh.com/ergonomicSurveyRequest.cfm).

Ergonomic evaluation requests that are related to a diagnosed health condition or disability that is not work-related should also include the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services. Requests for accommodations can be submitted through their department website (https://accessibility.umbc.edu/).

Additionally, ESH may initiate an ergonomic evaluation after observation of an activity or condition that presents potential ergonomic hazards, as well as following an accident or near-miss that presents possible ergonomic concerns.

Controlling Ergonomic Hazards

Following an ergonomic evaluation, ESH will provide the employee and their supervisor with a report of findings and recommendations for measures to control identified ergonomic risk factors. ESH will also facilitate or assist with implementation of recommended measures.

Depending on the hazards identified and the work being performed, the measures that are recommended will vary. Examples of control measures may include introducing new equipment that reduces ergonomic strain when performing a task, modifying the flow of work being performed (such as rotating to different tasks), adjusting an employee's chair to improve posture, or rearranging items at an employee's workstation so that frequently used equipment is within easier reach. ESH may perform follow up evaluations as necessary to ensure any adjustments or modifications to the work area are effective.

Ergonomic Equipment

ESH will assist departments with selection of ergonomic equipment or accessories. It should be noted that any equipment that is purchased will be charged to the evaluated employee(s)'s department. This includes office furniture and accessories such as task chairs, keyboard trays, sit-to-stand workstations, monitor risers, and footrests.

Depending on the nature and outcome of the evaluation, ESH reserves the right to request that an employee provide a note from their healthcare provider indicating a medical need or recommendation for the equipment.

Employees may not utilize personally-owned ergonomic equipment, furniture, or accessories to outfit their University workstation without express knowledge and approval from the University.

Remote Work

Remote or hybrid telework employees who wish to have an ergonomic assessment conducted of their remote workstation shall inform their manager and complete an ergonomic assessment request. ESH will make arrangements to conduct a virtual ergonomic assessment of the employee's workstation.

A computer or mobile device with a stable internet connection and a camera for virtual conferencing is required for a virtual ergonomic assessment. ESH will not conduct in-person ergonomic evaluations of remote workstations in non-University owned or leased spaces, including employees' places of residence.

For more information on remote or hybrid-telework workstation requirements, refer to the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management's policies and procedures regarding remote work.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Area Managers, Deans, Administrators

- Ensure employees have equipment and resources to perform job tasks safely and comfortably.
- Notify ESH if an employee has an ergonomic concern or requests an ergonomic workstation assessment.
- Assist with ordering of equipment and accessories for employees following a workplace ergonomic assessment in accordance with ESH recommendations.

Employees

- Follow ergonomic guidelines and recommendations to promote personal musculoskeletal health and safety.
- Notify supervision if ergonomic concerns or hazards are identified, or if personal discomfort is being experienced, or to request a workstation ergonomic evaluation.

Environmental Safety and Health

- Provide consultation, training and subject matter guidance to department managers and employees on ergonomic guidelines and best practices, including proper workstation set up, body mechanics, and posture.
- Conduct ergonomic evaluations of workstations and workspaces upon employee or manager request, or following self-identification of ergonomic hazards.
- Prepare reports of findings including recommendations for controlling ergonomic hazards, following an ergonomic evaluation, for presentation to managers and employees.
- Assist with the selection of ergonomic workstation equipment and provide ordering information to department managers.

V. REFERENCES

- UMBC Policy VI-13.00.01 - Environmental Safety and Health Management and Enforcement
- UMBC Policy VII-11.00.01 - UMBC Telework & Remote Work Policy
- UMBC ESH Procedure - General Safety Rules for UMBC Employees