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SAMPLE ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

The sample program we provide in this chapter is a framework model for a midsized company that uses internal resources only. The employees of the internal EH&S department manage the program and conduct the ergonomic evaluations as well as the ergonomics training. The company has employees in office environments and in manufacturing and assembly operations, and is asked to add the pertinent details relating to those environments.

ACME CORPORATION ERGONOMICS PROGRAM

At Acme we strive to maintain a safe, comfortable, and productive work environment for all employees. A key component of achieving that goal is to understand and apply ergonomics to the workstations and activities of our employees. *Ergonomics* is the science of human engineering, which involves designing a workplace that “fits” a person’s physical dimensions, with the intent of preventing work-related injuries and illnesses and increasing comfort and productivity. The premise of our program is to provide the resources necessary so that all employees can be made of aware of ergonomic considerations in their work activities and have their workstations configured within established ergonomic guidelines.

Responsibility

Responsibility for this program begins with the manager of environmental health and safety (EH&S), who serves as the focal point for information on the causes, concerns, and solutions for ergonomic issues. The EH&S department works with the Workers' Compensation administrator and the facilities department to aid all employees regarding their workstations configurations and the activities involved in performing the tasks required for any job assignment. The EH&S department creates and implements programs to improve awareness of ergonomic issues and provide early intervention for employees who believe that they are developing symptoms related to repetitive motions, awkward postures, or workstation design factors.

Program Elements

1. *Office equipment standards for a new office setup.* The EH&S manager works with facilities personnel to decide which products to purchase for the standard office setup.

2. *Manufacturing and service workstation setup.* Manufacturing employees who believe that their workstations require modifications notify their lead or supervisor, who in turn contacts the process engineer for their area. If the process engineer cannot resolve the issue, an employee contacts the EH&S manager.

3. *Manufacturing tools.* The EH&S department, process engineers, and advanced manufacturing staff establish standards for hand tools that are safe and comfortable while maintaining an acceptable level of productivity.

4. *Training.* The EH&S department conducts ergonomics training programs on an ongoing basis that are offered to all employees. The department updates all training information, including computer-based ergonomic training and computer station setup documentation on a continuing basis. Ergonomics is a topic for every new employee orientation session, where employees are advised of Acme's ergonomics program and who to contact with any concerns.

5. *Workstation evaluations.* Ergonomic issues are to be reported at the first sign of repetitive strain or continuing upper-extremity aches, pains, or numbness. Every employee has access to the online training programs, which provide a self-assessment of their activities, postures, and workstation configuration. If their concerns are not resolved through the online information, a link is provided to request an ergo-

onomic evaluation. Employees provide their location, phone number, work schedule, and briefly describe their discomfort.

A member of the EH&S department then performs a workstation evaluation at a time that is acceptable to the employee and his or her manager. A written report of the evaluation findings is sent to the manager with recommendations for corrective action as well as notations of any improvement achieved during the evaluation. If the recommendations require expenditures for equipment, management approval is necessary.

6. *Ergonomic equipment recommended.* The evaluator will include in the written report details of all equipment recommendations, and the report will be sent to the employee's manager. Any equipment that requires a purchase request must be approved by the evaluatee's manager. If the equipment requires installation or assembly, the evaluator will generate a facilities service request for that work. If equipment items were provided from the EH&S inventory at the time of the evaluation, a charge-back form will be sent to the evaluatee manager with the report. EH&S department has relationships with prequalified vendors for all recommended ergonomic equipment used at Acme.

7. *Exercise and stretching programs.* Stretching and exercise routines approved by the Acme-designated medical provider are conducted regularly in the manufacturing and service areas. These routines are made available to all employees, and all departments are encouraged to participate in stretching and exercise periods for all employees.