

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

ENTERPRISE GOODS AND SERVICES, RISK MANAGEMENT

OFFICE WORKSTATION ERGONOMIC GUIDELINES

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Purpose

The majority of state employees perform their work in an office environment. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹, maintaining a healthy office environment requires attention to workstation design. The guidelines presented in this document promote the use of well-designed, properly adjusted office furnishings that reduce the risk of office workplace injuries and occupational diseases.

Authority

ORS 278.405 grants the Department the authority to provide technical risk management services and to adopt policies governing the administration of risk management activities.

Definitions

Ergonomics: an applied science concerned with the characteristics of people that need to be considered in designing things that they use in order that people and things will interact most effectively and safely—called also *human engineering*, *human factors engineering*

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders: repetitive strain injury

Guidelines

1. Introduction

A well-designed office allows each employee to work comfortably without needing to over-reach, sit or stand too long, or use awkward postures (correct ergonomic design)². The objectives of these guidelines are to offer ways for state agencies, boards and commissions to achieve well-designed offices that:

- a. Reflect proactive intervention before injury occurs
- b. Provide best practices based on current science and technology
- c. Are Affordable
- d. Are easy to implement
- e. Reduce the need for requiring prescriptions for affordable ergonomic requests
- f. Align with existing furniture contracts
- g. Have supportive training and a toolkit addressing ergonomic considerations

- h. Discourage fads in office furnishings with no evidence-based research to support their use.

2. Ergonomic Best Practices

Research from the leading research institutes such as the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health consistently reinforce the need for use of good office ergonomics. The benefits derived from implementing a program based on sound ergonomic best practices include a reduction of workers' compensation costs and claims related to musculoskeletal disorders and allow for improved employee productivity and wellness.

Since the implementation of the Ergonomic Consensus Guidelines by DAS Risk Management in the 1980s, the suite of ergonomic considerations for office/workstation furnishings and equipment has expanded and improved. Changes include the introduction of fully adjustable office chairs, work surfaces and computer monitors aimed at improving the fit of the work area. They also include a broad expansion in keyboard, keyboard tray and mouse designs aimed at preventing awkward postures and arm extensions.

The intent of these guidelines is to promote the use of these technological advances as best practices for office workers in the employ of the state of Oregon. It is also the intent of these rules to discourage the use of office/workstation furnishings and equipment that do not meet the test of sound ergonomic technology. Discouraged furnishings and equipment include the use of physical fitness equipment as office chairs and workstations. These include the use of exercise balls as chairs and workout equipment as workstations. It is the primary premise of these guidelines that state offices should only use office/workstation furnishings that have been acknowledged by accredited research as being safe and sound for office use.

3. DAS Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- a. DAS Risk Management to ensure a training program is available for the purpose of educating key individuals in agencies to provide ergonomic consultations for the purchase and adjustment of office/workstation furnishings and equipment.
- b. DAS Risk Management to ensure training is available for employees that will allow them to adjust their office/workstation furnishings and equipment. This training will be provided through a designated, easily accessible website toolkit dedicated to implementing sound ergonomics.
- c. DAS Procurement to provide contracts that maintain the ease of purchasing ergonomically designed office/workstation furnishings and equipment. This will include ergonomic choices for chairs, desks, work surfaces, monitors, keyboards, mice, and other accessories that further sound ergonomic best practices.
- d. DAS Facilities to provide cubicle and modular office designs that allow for the implementation of sound ergonomic best practices.

4. Agency Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of agencies to:

- a. Provide office workers with ergonomically suitable worksite furnishings and equipment.
- b. Ensure the ergonomic self-assessment training program is accessible to office workers.
- c. Have employees trained as ergonomic consultants as needed.
- d. Ensure office worker supervisors are:
 1. Familiar with these guidelines and Supervisor's Ergonomic Toolkit.
 2. Address ergonomics with their new employees.
 3. Provide office workers with access to the ergonomic self-adjustment online training.

5. Resources

- a. Office Workstation Ergonomic Guidelines
- b. State of Oregon Office Ergonomic Self-Assessment Training
- c. State of Oregon Office Ergonomics Self-Assessment Form
- d. Introduction to the New Office Ergonomics Guideline
- e. Ergonomics Toolkit for Supervisor's and Ergonomic Assessors

Sources:

1, 2 National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health,
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/officeenvironment/>

Definitions: Medline Plus, A service of the US National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health