

Running a participative ergonomics education program

18 December 2015

Overview

This information sheet has been developed to provide mentoring advice and tips to anyone who is running a participative ergonomics education program in their workplace.

It should be read alongside our other participative ergonomics education program guidance;

- *Participative ergonomics - Train the work teams facilitator's guide*
- *Managing Musculoskeletal Disorders: A practical guide to preventing musculoskeletal disorders in the NSW mining and extractives industry.*

It provides further direction and links to material that will help you deliver a more holistic program and gain the positive outcomes the program is designed to achieve.

Program information

Participatory ergonomics is a site based program that uses the concept of workers as the task experts. With the assistance of several site champions the aim of the program is to identify a workplace's 'gut busting' activities. It then uses the hierarchy of controls to implement changes and reduce the hazardous manual component of the task.

The program is run over six sessions with the first two sessions focusing on content in the facilitators guide and the remaining session devoted to discussion and planning of ideas. In addition the remaining sessions provide participants with the opportunity to show case the implementation of the initiatives.

Program models

There a number of different models which can be adopted when implementing the participatory ergonomics programme. The model will depend on a number of factors this includes the:

- size of the organisation
- engagement of workers
- opportunity available to participate in the training
- different areas within the organisation that you want the programme to target.



In the program, workers are the task experts.

The different models are as follows:

Model	Structure	Weakness	Opportunities
One area or shift participating in the programme, for example development or the maintenance department.	Have five or six key champions from the specific shift or area to participate in the program.	May be periods when some workers may not be available due to leave and production issues. May have only one participant turn up for training. Idea sharing just in group, not hearing other ideas or suggestions from other areas of the organisation.	Use the model as a trial before implementing in other areas of the organisation.
All organisation.	Have champions from different teams or sections within the organisation.	Logistically it can be difficult to coordinate. One team or section may not be as committed to the program.	More opportunity to share ideas and hear from other people Atmosphere can be nurtured to have some healthy competition by either awards or presentation to management, which will bring the non-committed individuals along on the journey.
Different sites, same organisation.	Have champions from different sites within the same organisation.	Can be difficult logistically to get different sites together. Need to gain commitment from all levels of management.	Can share ideas between different site Friendly rivalry between sites which influences implementation of initiatives
Different sites, different organisations.	Organise a program for the same sector in a location that can be accessed by different organisations. This format has been run successfully within the extractives sector.	Logistically can be hard to organise. Some organisations will not share ideas.	Sharing of ideas across companies for the benefit of the industry. Networking opportunities. Friendly rivalry between sites which influences implementation of initiatives. Promoted via an award program.

Tips for running a successful program

It's important to remember when looking to implement new initiatives, that the easy wins are implemented first so the program gains traction and momentum within the workplace.

Session 1

Session 1 should be about 3 hours in length

Presentation aids and examples

- You can use a PowerPoint presentation to assist with the training but it should only be used as tool and the delivery of the training should not be reliant on the presentation.
- You can use any aids you would like to assist in delivering the information about the body, muscles, bones and joints.
- It's also beneficial to provide experiences / examples or relate types of jobs to the muscles, joints or bones that may impact these areas.
- Have the workers talk about musculoskeletal injuries they may have sustained, if they feel comfortable.

This section of the module and discussion should be limited to no more than one hour in length. The same applies to the manual and hazardous manual tasks section of the module.

Identifying hazardous manual tasks

You need to clearly outline what a hazardous manual task is. The guide has some great information however you can also refer participants to the code of practice: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/hazardous-manual-tasks-cop

- The program has successfully used the acronym PERVD for the characteristics of a hazardous manual task which is P= posture, E= exertion of force, R= repetition, V= vibration and D= Duration
 - Put PERVD on a white board and then go through each of the characteristics one by one, outlining tasks that are representative of each of the characteristics. Ensure the group discusses it.
- Ask workers to identify hazardous manual tasks within their organisation and put these on a white board (ensure you take a picture of the final list).
- Outline the benefits of this programme over stretching and exercise programmes.
- Discuss contributory risk factors of a musculoskeletal injury.
- Take the opportunity to talk about fatigue and rostering and the opportunity for recovery.
- When discussing prevention and management of musculoskeletal disorders, you should outline examples of effective controls that have been implemented within your organisation or other organisations. Some examples from other programs are available on our website at: www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/522578/central-west-participatory-ergonomics-initiatives.pdf

Implementation of the communication strategy

- The facilitator's guide outlines the most effective way to implement this within an organisation. It is important to remember it is the participants communication strategy, you are only giving them guides and tools and it is up to them to determine the best way of rolling this out within their organisation.
- Provide the participants with a "homework" handout. Create a clear expectation that participants are to complete the activity prior to the next meeting.
- All the resources for the program including videos, posters, perform risk assessment tool and any other useful information should be provided to the participants on a USB stick. Posters and stickers are also handed out at the completion of this session;
- Reassure the participants that is not a difficult task and ensure you brain storm with the group ways they could roll out the communication strategy and gather the information from their team mates with regards to hazardous manual tasks;
- Ensure this activity is driven by the workers and not by you as the coach, your role is just to generate discussion and record ideas.

Session 2

Session 2 is about 3 hours in length.

Presentation aids and examples

- You can use a PowerPoint presentation to assist with the training but it should only be used as tool and the delivery of the training should not be reliant on the presentation.
- You can use any aids you would like to help deliver the risk management module.
- The type of risk assessment tool used in the training is determined by the facilitator. It should be easy to use. The tool use by the department is the PEforM tool.
- When discussing risk assessment it's important that the hierarchy of control is used when looking at controls and an emphasis is made on higher order controls and not lower order controls.
- The following links are useful guides in helping coordinate the risk management module. This information is sourced from the workplace health and safety electrical safety office worker's compensation regulator:
 - www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/hazardous-manual-tasks/participative-ergonomics-for-manual-tasks-perform
 - www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/forms-and-resources/films/no-sprains,-big-gains
 - www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/hazardous-manual-tasks/participative-ergonomics-for-manual-tasks-perform/perform-resources

Workplace activity

- Coordinate a workplace activity during this session for each of the participants to complete a PEforM risk assessment. The participants should use a task that they identified as part of their group.
- At the completion of this activity, you need to discuss each PEforM tool as a group, controls should also be encouraged and discussed and should form the basis of the activity.

Homework

- At the end of this session homework activity 2 should be clearly outlined to the participants. The activity includes having the participants complete a PEforM risk assessment tool with possible controls, with the help of their team mates. This information is to be presented back to the group in the third session.
- The participants should be provided with three blank copies of the PEforM risk assessment tool.

Reminder: When looking at the hazardous manual tasks and controls it should be emphasised to the participants that easy wins or easy to implement controls should be completed first, as this will help the program gain momentum within the workplace.

Sessions 3, 4, 5 and 6

- Once the participants have identified the hazardous manual tasks, the tasks should be prioritised. Coordinate an activity which allows the workers time to list and prioritise their tasks.
- Ensure you focus on implementing controls and ensure this section is put on a whiteboard.
- The presence of management is always a positive in sessions 3, 4, 5, and 6. This provides an opportunity to discuss possible solutions and ideas and provides management with the opportunity to consider the feasibility of the controls.
- Time should also be allocated to evaluating participatory ergonomic controls. Ensure this information is also put on a whiteboard and discussed as a group.
- The remainder of the sessions should be focused on the workers presenting a PEforM risk assessment tool and showcasing what they have done to implement a control.
- It's important during these sessions that videos and pictures are used and the workers are aware they are expected take footage and bring it to the training.
- If the program is going really well it's okay to drop a session and only have five sessions in total.

More information

If you have questions, or would like more information, please email the Mining Industry Assistance Unit at minesafety.assistance@trade.nsw.gov.au.

Acknowledgments

This publication is a joint initiative of the Mine Safety Advisory Council and NSW Department of Industry. It was written by the NSW Mine Safety Industry Assistance Unit.

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PUB15/550