

ERGONOMIC POLICY

PURPOSE

Olds College has developed an Ergonomic Policy to focus on prevention of work related injuries and to ensure resources are systematically distributed to staff.

PRINCIPLES (GUIDELINES)

1. Every worker is entitled to information required to use computers, *equipment* and other tools without developing an injury.
2. Workers should have a workstation that accommodates their individual needs.
3. Every computer workstation will include footrests, document holders, wrist and mouse rests and chairs that meet safety standards, as required.
4. Ergonomic furniture and tools will be provided according to the guidelines.

WORKER EDUCATION

The Occupational Health Nurse will offer regular formal presentations to computer operators. For other employees at risk of developing ergonomic injuries, small group information sessions will be made available as requested. Information will be made available to all staff unable to attend formal educational sessions. Any employee seeking ergonomic equipment should read printed information supplied by the Occupational Health Nurse. Included in the Worker Education is:

- information about exercises which should be done before using the computer on a regular basis, usually at the beginning of the day.
- information on eye care that includes eye exercises, blinking eyes, need for eye moisture, and frequent eye examinations.
- the need for frequent rest stops. Dedicated and frequent computer users should stop every 30 minutes for stretching exercises. These breaks are *in addition* to other scheduled breaks.

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING ERGONOMIC FURNITURE

A. Worker Priorities

The priorities for ergonomic furniture and equipment are based upon:

1. Medical Conditions. This assessment is based upon an *assessment* in consultation with the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services. Some of the conditions may include but are not limited to; arthritis, diabetes, thyroid conditions, vascular disorders, poor physical condition, prior musculoskeletal disorders, stress, pregnancy, menopause and advancing age.
2. Dedicated Computer Operators are those who spend over 4 hours a day on computers on an ongoing basis.
3. Frequent Computer Users are staff who use computers or other equipment over 4 hours a day, but only for 2 or 3 days a week.
4. Staff working in unacceptable workstations as assessed by the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services.

B. Furniture and Equipment Priorities

1. The chair, that is fitted for the individual is essential to helping employees prevent injuries.

2. Footrests, document holders, and task lighting should be considered part of the basic workstation for computer users. Non-computer users may need ergonomically correct tools, mats and knives.
3. Other furniture/equipment includes but is not limited to adjustable work surfaces, headsets, and lighting filters.

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING OTHER ERGONOMIC TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

The priorities for purchasing other ergonomic tools and equipment are:

1. *Medical Conditions. This assessment is based upon an assessment in consultation with the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services. Some of the conditions may include but are not limited to; arthritis, diabetes, vascular disorders, poor physical condition, musculoskeletal disorders, and advancing age.*
2. *Frequency of equipment or tool use. Staff who use the equipment or tool two - four hours daily.*
3. *Staff working with unacceptable equipment or tools as assessed by the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services.*
4. *Department's need for the work and/or tool as indicated by both the worker and the manager.*

PROCEDURES

1. The Purchasing Officer and the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services will develop guidelines for office furniture and ergonomic equipment. However, managers/employees are able to purchase other equipment if the same standard is met.
2. For individuals with special needs, including height requirements, chairs outside the general guidelines will be purchased. Chairs with armrests should be used for those with upper back problems, for those using computers for extended periods of time and for those whose chair will fit under the work surface. Armrests need to be adjustable.
3. The work surface is important for worker's safety. The work surface must allow the worker's knees and legs to fit under the work surface and usually should be 17 cm above the worker's knee. Adjustable work surfaces may need to be purchased depending upon the problem. Blocks of wood may be used to raise the work surface, if it can be done safely.
4. Olds College will contract with at least two companies to provide us with ergonomic equipment and/or furniture. These companies will be asked to include a two-week trial in trying new equipment. They will also be asked to service the equipment purchased from them. Purchases from other businesses that do not provide the same service may be denied.
5. Applications for equipment/furniture will be made to the Purchasing Officer.
6. The Purchasing Officer will request the applicant to notify the Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services if there has not been an assessment completed on this particular workstation or if the applicant has developed any medical conditions requiring the need for changes to the workstation.

7. The Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services will assess the applicant's workstation and review health needs. The Coordinator of Health & Wellness Services will submit the recommendations to the Chair of the Occupational Health & Safety Committee and to the Purchasing Officer.
8. Purchasing of office equipment and ergonomic equipment is subject to budget and purchasing guidelines of Olds College.