

ERGO Tip: Ergonomic Checklists

Fact: Ergonomic-related injuries typically account for 40-60% of injuries and 50-75% of workers' compensation costs.

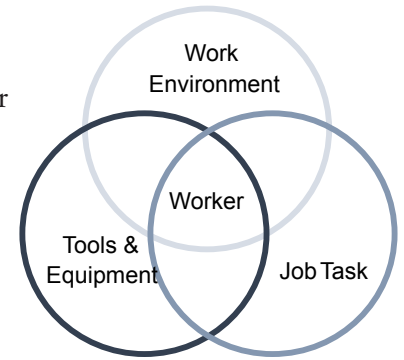
Ergonomics play a huge role in the work environment.

Proper ergonomics not only increases productivity and quality of work, it also decreases worker injuries.

When we design jobs to fit within the physical limits of the workers, we minimize the potential for employee injury. The question then becomes: How do we know when work tasks are within these safe parameters?

$$\text{Injury} = \frac{\text{Job Physical Demands}}{\text{Worker Limits}}$$

We need to gather information about everything that touches, influences, and impacts workers. When looking at job or workstation design, one must know details about the job task itself, the tools and equipment used to complete the tasks, and the work environment. When those variables are defined, they must then be applied to the working population. Ergonomics allow us to use design parameters to ensure job tasks and workstations don't exceed the limits, or capabilities, of at least 75-90% of the working population. Ergonomic tools allow us to discern safe from potentially unsafe levels to which workers are exposed.



Checklists are a good starting point. They alert you that a closer look may be needed to determine safe work levels. The Washington State Checklist is a tool comprised of two parts: The Caution Zone Checklist and the Hazard Zone Checklist. The Caution Zone Checklist is always used first when looking at jobs. Any task or risk identified on the Caution Zone Checklist must then be further evaluated on the Hazard Zone Checklist. If the task qualifies under the hazard parameters, it must be fixed to reduce the risk of injury. This is possible by decreasing the risk factor so it stays subordinate to the hazard level.

The tool is free for use and is very simple to follow. You may download copies here:

Caution Zone Checklist: <https://institute.welcoa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/WISHA-Caution-Zones-Checklist.pdf>

Hazard Zone Checklist: <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/docs/HazardZoneChecklist.pdf>

If you're ready to make a change and improve ergonomics in the workplace and would like more help executing an ergonomic plan, please contact your West Bend loss control representative.