

# Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

The Top Presenting Health Issue Among Ontario Temporary Foreign Agriculture Workers (TFAW)\*

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are injuries or disorders of the:



When these tissues are stressed on a regular basis, without enough rest, they can become damaged and lead to MSDs.

\*In 2022, interviews with seven Ontario primary health care clinics offering specialized services to temporary foreign agricultural workers (TFAWs) identified MSDs as the top presenting health issue.

## Signs and Symptoms



SWELLING



PAIN / DISCOMFORT



STIFFNESS /  
RANGE-OF-MOTION LOSS



INABILITY TO PERFORM  
TASKS and DUTIES

Excess of any of these risk factors may contribute to the development of MSDs.

## Risk Factors



### FORCE

Using too much force to lift, push or pull an object.



### PRESSURE

Too much pressure applied to a body part for a long period of time.



### AWKWARD POSTURE

Body positions such as reaching, twisting, bending.



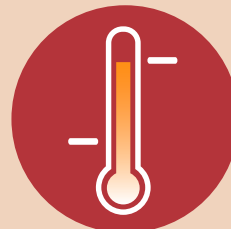
### STATIC POSTURE

Any body position that is held for a long period of time.



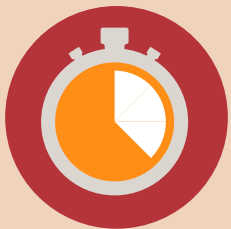
### VIBRATION

Vibration transferred from tools and vehicles may affect all, or part, of the body.



### TEMPERATURE

Working in hot or cold conditions can make things worse.



### LACK OF REST

Using the same body part(s) to perform tasks without allowing enough time to rest and recover.



**STRESS** can change how work is performed. It may cause stiffness, awkward postures and/or increased force.



Individuals may respond differently to these risk factors due to **gender, strength, size, experience, etc.**

Many of these risk factors are related, and **any combination** may increase the risk level.

# Employer Responsibilities

Employers should provide:



MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS PREVENTION PROGRAM and TRAINING



PROPER TOOLS and EQUIPMENT to reduce stress and strain



REGULAR MAINTENANCE ON TOOLS and EQUIPMENT



JOB ROTATION reduce exposure to the hazards



HAZARD, SAFETY and EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION and TRAINING



SUPPORTING, MONITORING and FOLLOWING-UP on a worker's condition



MODIFIED DUTIES alternative duties for injured workers



ADDITIONAL BREAKS give the injured body parts time to rest

...and for those workers already experiencing MSD symptoms:

Employers should also have a process to **IDENTIFY, PREVENT** and **REDUCE** the risk factors that contribute to development of MSDs.

This process should:



**INCLUDE** workers, health and safety representatives, and/or joint health and safety committee members.



**PROVIDE** translation / interpretation as needed to allow everyone to contribute effectively.



**BE SUPPORTED** by the employer so workers feel comfortable participating.

## Identification and Control

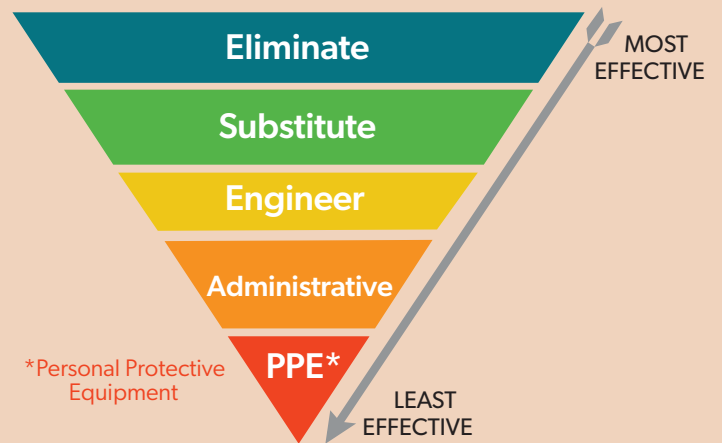
**R** **RECOGNIZE** a hazard /possible improvements.

**A** **ASSESS** risk level of hazard.

**C** **CONTROL** the hazard using the Hierarchy of Controls.

**E** **EVALUATE** effectiveness and identify room for improvement

### Hierarchy of Controls



## Action If you are experiencing symptoms of MSDs:



Talk to your supervisor, employer, safety representatives, and/or joint health and safety committee about your symptoms and what you think might be causing them.



Seek medical attention to get a proper diagnosis of your symptoms. Let the health care provider know if you think your work is causing the symptoms. Ask them about WSIB.



Through Ontario's WSIB, you have a right to compensation for lost wages or medical costs if you get hurt or sick because of your job (may include MSDs). Call the WSIB\* for more information on making a claim: 1-800-387-0750. When you reach an agent, ask to speak to someone in your language. Ask OHCOW, a community group, or legal aid clinic for help to make your claim. Legal aid clinics can help with claims and appeals. For more information contact: IAVGO Legal Clinic Toll-Free: 1-866-521-8535.

## Additional Tools and Resources

[Musculoskeletal Disorders \(MSDs\)](#) [OHCOW]

[Manual Materials Handling Video Series](#) [OHCOW]

[Migrant and Temporary Agricultural Workers](#) [OHCOW]

[Ontario MSD Prevention Guideline Quickstart](#) [CRE-MSD]

[Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders \(WMSDs\)](#) [CCOHS]

[Musculoskeletal Health](#) [World Health Organization]