

Manual of Administration

TOPIC: Health and Safety	SUBJECT: Musculoskeletal Disorders Prevention - Housekeeping	Code: HS122
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POLICY STATEMENT

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are injuries and disorders of the musculoskeletal system. They may be caused or aggravated by various risk factors in the workplace. MSDs include injuries and disorders of the muscles, tendons, nerves and skeletal system that are caused through repetitive strain or abnormal flexation of joints for extended periods of time.

MSDs DO NOT include musculoskeletal injuries or disorders that are a direct result of a fall, struck by or against something, caught in or on something, violence or vehicle collisions.

It is the purpose of this policy to guide staff in how to know the risks for housekeeping duties and reduce the risk of MSD injuries as much as possible.

DEFINITION

Housekeeping includes duties such as: sweeping, vacuuming, washing floors, washing dishes, making beds and doing laundry etc.

PROCEDURES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee:

- Ensure housekeeping equipment is properly maintained.
- When lifting or carrying objects, i.e. laundry baskets, keep the object as close to your body as possible.
- Use proper lifting techniques. Keep your back straight and use your legs to lift. Bend your knees, don't twist your body when lifting.
- Avoid using tools with very small or large handgrips and use the proper tool for the task.
- Avoid pulling heavy objects, push them if possible and ask for help if required.
- Avoid working with a bent or twisted back or neck.
- Avoid working with elbows raised or hands above the head and long or repeated reaches.

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- Avoid the use of back belts or other assistive devices unless prescribed by a health professional.
- Take two or three one minute breaks hourly, from repetitive jobs such as lifting, pushing, pulling and jobs requiring force, awkward or sustained positions.
- Use job rotation or task variation.
- Report symptoms when they occur.
- Alternate between sitting and standing when possible.

Supervisor:

- Encourage suggestions for safer housekeeping practices.
- Avoid overtime work.
- Encourage employees to report symptoms when they occur.
- Investigate causes of MSDs when reported.