

IMPORTANT POINTS

- When you arrive on a job site to which you were assigned by LaborTek and can't find the contact that you are supposed to meet, we ask that you stay around and give us a call. Do not leave the premises before giving us a call.
- It's very important to hand in your time cards on a weekly basis. As a reminder our working weeks run from Sunday at 0:01 am to Saturday at midnight. The deadline for submitting your time cards is Tuesday at 10:00 am, no matter the number of time cards that you have for this work week. You can fax them to us or you can drop them off at the office.
- We operate in a service industry and it's very important that we offer a superb service to our clients. You are an employee of Labor-Tek but you work for our clients. Your reliability towards your work and your punctuality at work contribute greatly to what is known as the Client Value Proposition. That refers to all the great things put together that we offer to our clients.

Have a safe and healthy month.

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WHAT ARE MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs. MSDs are not typically the result of any instantaneous or acute event (such as a slip, trip, or fall) but reflect a more gradual or chronic development.

Medical terms used to describe MSDs to various parts of the body include low back pain, tendinitis, bursitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger, thoracic outlet syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger, thoracic outlet syndrome, carpet layers' knee, and degenerative disc disease.

WHY ARE MSDs A PROBLEM?

- MSDs may cause a great deal of pain and suffering among afflicted workers.
- MSDs are among the most common lost-time injuries. Over a seven-year period, MSDs average approximately 32% of the total annual lost-time injuries in Ontario construction (see Figure 1).
- MSDs are among the most costly occupational problems. MSDs accounted over 28% of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) costs.
- Job activities that may cause MSDs span diverse workplaces and operations. MSDs may decrease productivity and the quality of products and services. Workers experiencing aches and pains on the job may not be able to do quality work.

WHAT RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO MSDs?

1) **Forceful exertion** - Force is the amount of effort required to perform a task or job. The amount of force one can exert depends on one's posture and the number of exertions performed. The more force that is exerted, the greater the stress on the body. Lifting, pushing, pulling, and gripping a tool are examples of activities that require exerting force or muscle effort.

2) **Repetitive movements** - Movements performed over and over are described as repetitive movements. But a repetitive movement can also be an awkward posture held for long periods of time. These movements can be of risk to the worker because of continual stress placed on one body part without sufficient muscle recovery time. Nailing a deck, screwing drywall, and tying rebar are examples of repetitive tasks.

3) **Awkward postures** - Postures are the positions of body parts. Unnatural positions or awkward postures are the way in which joints are held or moved away from the body's natural position. The closer the joint is to its end of range of motion (for instance, bending the back forward as far as possible), the greater the stress placed on the soft tissues of that joint, such as muscles, nerves, and tendons.

4) *Secondary risk factors*

Contact pressure is any external pressure that is applied to soft tissues and puts stress on those tissues. Holding tools where handles press into parts of the hand or arm is an example of contact pressure.

Vibration is a secondary risk factor which can cause damage to nerves and blood tissues as well as other soft tissues.

What can you do?

Make sure you've been trained to do your job safely and to know the hazards or factors in your job that could cause MSD. Take steps to control or eliminate MSD hazards and participate in making your workplace safer.

- Report MSD hazards and concerns to your supervisor.
- Use the equipment and tools provided to reduce exposure to MSD hazards.
- Know how to make adjustments to the workstation and make them suit you and the work you do.
- Take rest breaks from repetitive or forceful tasks.
- Move around and occasionally change positions.
- Go to your supervisor with questions, concerns or for additional training.
- Offer suggestions to improve working conditions to your supervisor or through your health and safety representative.
- Be aware of the symptoms of MSD and if you have any, report them to your supervisor.