

SAFETY MEETING

Company Name: Superior Waterproofing

Tool Talk #19

Date: 5/13/2022

ERGONOMICS IN CONSTRUCTION

Ergonomics is defined as fitting the job or task to the worker in order to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders or MSD. These injuries develop slowly over time and occur in the soft tissues of your body like the nerves, tendons, muscles, ligaments and joints. Examples of MSDs are low back strain, carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.

Ergonomics can help you protect your body from injuries. Using ergonomics during work activities makes the work easier on your body and often helps you find ways to do your work more efficiently.

Unlike injuries, MSDs don't seem very serious when they first show up. They **start with minor discomfort** in the early stages. These symptoms go away after a short break or at night when you don't work. But returning to the same activity the next day brings back the symptoms. In the early stages your body can recover between episodes but eventually your body won't be able to recover to normal.

The five most common ergonomic hazards that may occur in work activities are:

- REPETITION – **Doing the same task repeatedly** using the same muscles over and over (using the same arm motion to repeatedly spread mortar for 2 or more hours). You should change the motion or change hands. Switch to a different task for a while with a different motion or using different muscles. Braces are also available.
- HIGH FORCE – **Using high muscle power** such as heavy lifting, pushing, gripping tools (gripping a tile nipper with a dull blade to cut tiles). Most important be sure the tools you are using are working properly and in good condition. Change blades when needed. If the tool weighs more than 2 lb. use two hands. Lastly change up the operation.
- AWKWARD POSTURE – Working with your body held in a poor position for a long time (spreading mortar with the **arm fully extended to the side and the wrist bent**. Build a taller scaffold, when possible move around to a less awkward position or take frequent breaks to rest the arm.
- CONTACT STRESS – When pressure from an object, such as a tool handle, is pushed on the soft body tissues (**kneeling without wearing kneepads**). Wear knee pads anytime you are kneeling and roll a towel to put under the backs of your knees to relieve pressure.
- HAND-ARM VIBRATION – **Vibration that enters the body from power tools**, and some hand tools (such as hammers). Using jack-hammers or a hand-held grinder to remove mortar joints for more than 2 hours in a shift. **Wear impact resistant gloves** (available from Mike) or wrap your hands to reduce the vibration.

JUST BECAUSE THAT IS THE WAY YOU HAVE ALWAYS DONE IT DOESN'T MEAN IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO PERFORM THE TASK!

QUESTIONS: 1) Pick one of the above hazards and tell me how you are dealing with it. _____

WHAT UNSAFE OPERATIONS DID YOU FIND ON YOUR JOBSITE THIS WEEK? _____

What Corrective action was taken? _____

Meeting Attended By _____

Supervisor's Signature _____