

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AWARENESS

Reducing Injuries ~ Reducing Costs

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Reducing Injuries

Can Ergonomics Intervention Reduce Repetitive Motion Injuries?

In today's business world, many companies are looking for ways to reduce their workers' comp claims. Everyone in business knows about the value of safety training, and of course Cal OSHA has given employers a laundry list of mandatory compliance issues. So how does ergonomics play into this scenario? Well, since repetitive motion injuries are the 6th largest injury category across the nation, costing employers 2.6 billion in workers' comp dollars and accounting for the largest median average for days away from work (24), ergonomics has become a hot topic. Many

employers are unaware that California has an Ergonomic Standard that requires the development of an Ergonomic Program under certain circumstances (see box). But aside from the compli-



ance issues, employers are also discovering that ergonomic interventions are very common sense in nature and can greatly impact the reduction of workers' comp claims as well as helping employees stay productive and com-

fortable at work. Since the goal of ergonomics is to fit the worker to the workplace, providing training, evaluations and solutions to control the exposure to RMIs can have a huge impact on companies bottom line.

Diana Pelletier is a Disability Management Specialist with a background in Workers' Compensation services. Her company, Pelletier & Associates, Inc. specializes in working with organizations to reduce their exposure to RMIs by instituting ergonomics programs.

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CALIFORNIA'S ERGONOMIC STANDARD

PREVENTION OF REPETITIVE MOTION INJURIES, SECTION 5110

Effective July 1997, California's Ergonomic Standard requires development of an ergonomic program for employers with one or more RMI within a 12 month period. The Ergonomic program should encompass worksite evaluation, control of exposures and employee training.



Reducing Costs

Workers' Compensation is a Controllable Cost!

What you do or don't do immediately following an injury can SAVE or COST you thousands of dollars instantly and even more over the life of the claim. If not managed properly from the onset, simple first aid incidents and medical only claims can develop into costly indemnity claims, affecting your bottom line and future insurance premiums. Today's employers are not armed with the knowledge or manpower to proactively and effectively manage their industrial injuries to avoid unnecessary costs. Partnering with the right occupational provider is

the first of 5 areas that employer's of all sizes need to focus on to get and keep control of these cost (See things to consider). Control must begin the moment you are notified there has been an injury. Directing your injured



employees to your designated clinic will keep you in control. Your pre-established relationship with the provider will ensure your valued em-

ployees receive prompt, appropriate treatment while missing the least amount of work possible.

Ginger Benter, founder of People Solutions, Inc., has successfully managed and reduced costs for over 60 organizations. Her extensive knowledge of workers' compensation and keen attention to detail has resulted in significant bottom line savings to these organizations.

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WHEN SELECTING AN OCCUPATIONAL PROVIDER HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- ✘ Specializes in occupational injuries
- ✘ Has a thorough understanding of workers' compensation
- ✘ Provides on-site physical therapy and specialists
- ✘ Supports your return-to-work philosophy
- ✘ You would be comfortable sending a loved one to treat there
- ✘ Establish a thorough and effective protocol that details all your expectations
- ✘ Confirm your employees are satisfied with the staff and the treatment