

SAFETY MATTERS

Creating a Culture of Safety

June 2024



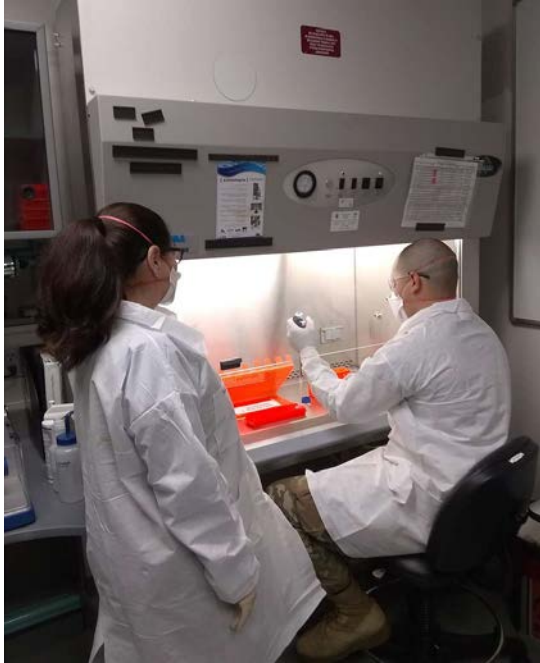
Focus on Ergonomics

Often forgotten or overlooked, ergonomics ensures people can easily work in a lab space, and keep working, safely and without injury. It is an area that is often overlooked until cited by safety groups such as OSHA.

At the request of many, this month's newsletter will focus on ergonomics.



Laboratory ergonomics is the design of tools, workstations, and processes to improve well-being and performance. It considers the whole person, including their physical, cognitive, and work organization domains.



Ergonomics are not always stated explicitly, but they're always embedded somewhere in audits or organization standards. Sometimes it's environmental: chairs that adjust to a correct height for viewing monitors under proper lighting, at the right angle; sometimes it's training: pipettes that conform to a hand shape and bench training that shows how to hold a pipette and aspirate or dispense without repetitive strain on the wrist.

A poorly designed Laboratory, work station or even stock room can lead to staff experiencing unnecessary pain which can lead to a poor quality of life and many missed days at work.



Some easy rules:

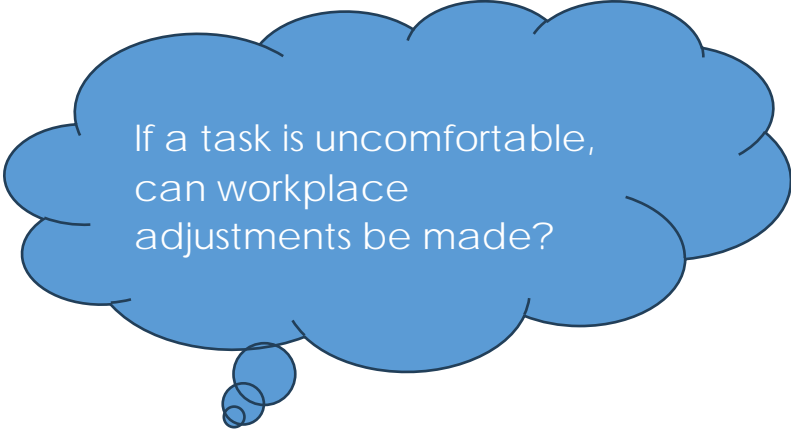
Keep work in front of the body to minimize twisting and over-reaching. Strive for straight and neutral wrist position while working. Try alternating hands or using both hands to pipet. Use low profile tubes, containers, and receptacles to avoid bending and twisting of the wrists, neck and rolled shoulders.

There are five aspects of ergonomics: safety, comfort, ease of use, productivity/performance, and aesthetics. Ergonomics is a science concerned with the 'fit' between people and their work.

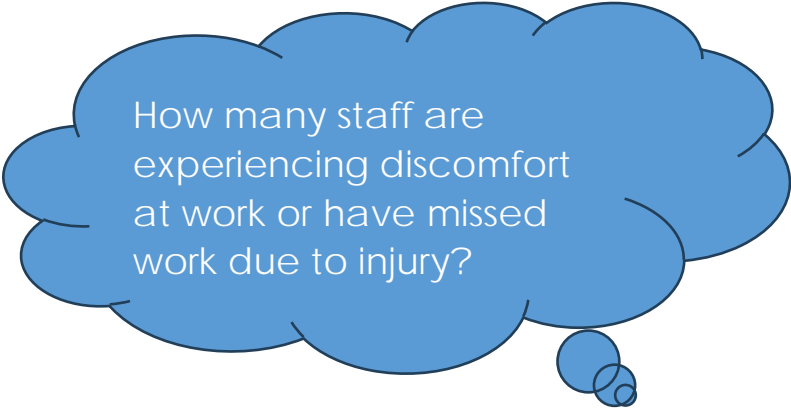
DAIDS GCLP Audit Question

Are reviews of safe work practices performed and documented at least annually?

This should also include an ergonomic review of the workplace.

A blue thought bubble with a black outline and three smaller circles leading to it from the bottom left. It contains the text: "If a task is uncomfortable, can workplace adjustments be made?"

If a task is uncomfortable,
can workplace
adjustments be made?

A blue thought bubble with a black outline and three smaller circles leading to it from the bottom right. It contains the text: "How many staff are experiencing discomfort at work or have missed work due to injury?"

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Practicing What We Preach



Here at the HPTN Lab Center in Baltimore we routinely perform safety reviews of our working area. In addition to the usual risk assessments for sharps, Biological materials, splash/spill risk etc, we also perform an ergonomic assessment.

We look at items such as: chair adjustments, computer screen height, anti-glare screens, are consumables within easy reach, provision of carts for movement of bulk reagents etc.

Feedback Request

Please do share any experiences, problems and successes that you have had in terms of improving the workplace through ergonomic design changes.

Send your feedback to us at hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu

May Edition – Reader Poll Results

Thanks to all who participated!

Question 1: Safety Training:

Safety Training Happens in Our Lab:	Of All Responders
Once each calendar year for all employees	34%
For newly hired employees, training and an assessment are completed within one week of start date	24%
At six-months after completing initial training	21%
Other	14%
New hires are trained within one week, but not assessed right away	4%
Every six months (twice per year)	0%

More than 68% of all who responded noted more than one option was possible at their laboratory. Most responses included once-yearly for all employees. "Other" responses included notes that areas such as hardware and software were included or that assessments are completed sometime between hiring and 6-months.

Question 2: Safety Competency:

Safety Assessment (Competency) for our lab includes:	Of All Responders
PPE use	20%
Bloodborne Pathogen education	18%
The use of emergency equipment (eye wash, showers, etc.)	18%
Chemical and Spill clean-up kit review	18%
Handwashing	17%
Other	5%

94% of responders chose at least 4 options supplied. "Other" responses included notes that other training such as waste management, fire safety, and dry ice or LN2 handling are included.

Question 3: Smoke Detectors:

Smoke Detector Maintenance: In our lab...	Of All Responders
We ensure all smoke detectors are tested by an outside provider at least once annually	75%
We test all smoke detectors ourselves at least once annually	19%
Smoke detectors are not tested at least once annually	6%
We have the written manufacturer recommendations for periodic testing	50%
We do not have the written manufacturer recommendations for periodic testing	0%

Only half of responders noted that they did have the manufacturer recommendations for periodic testing.

Thanks to those who sent back messages about our May 2024 edition. We are working to incorporate suggestions and topics into future safety bulletins.

Need more on a specific topic?

Ideas for upcoming subject matter?

Let us know your thoughts and give feedback at

hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu

Volunteers needed for safety focused interviews

The LC would like to speak with labs and have a short 10 minute/ 5 question interview to learn more about our audience. Interviews or selected quotes may be published in this newsletter.

Please contact hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu if interested