

## **MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS AWARENESS POLICY**

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to providing employees and volunteers with a safe and healthy workplace. This will be accomplished by focusing attention on the overall wellness and education of employees and volunteers about the risks of musculoskeletal disorders and ways to avoid them. All employees and volunteers are expected to actively support this policy and its procedures; non-compliance with the Musculoskeletal Disorders Awareness Policy is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. The Agency's Health & Safety Document outlines further information regarding musculoskeletal disorders (MSD).

### **Definition:**

A musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) is defined as an injury or disorder of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels, or related soft tissue, which occurs over a period of time. The term MSD is not a discrete medical diagnosis, rather an umbrella reference to various types of injuries. Causes or aggravations of these types of injuries are found in sports, household activities, activities of daily living, work and recreational stressors. An MSD may be referred to as:

- repetitive strain injury, not a single injury or event;
- cumulative trauma disorder, or
- repetitive motion injury.

### Examples of Musculoskeletal Disorders include:

- back pain,
- shoulder strains
- rotator cuff syndrome
- tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis),
- tendonitis, and

### **Goals and Objectives:**

The goal of this Policy is to increase and maintain awareness and education of the growing prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) in the workplace for all employees and volunteers; prevention will be the primary focus. Further objectives of the program are to reduce the number of musculoskeletal injuries and to comply with Occupational Health & Safety legislation. This will be accomplished through a participatory program by the Board of Directors, Management Staff, all support workers and volunteers.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

As with all matters relating to health and safety, responsibilities are shared among the workplace parties, more specifically:

#### Employer (Sections 25 and 26, Occupational Health & Safety Act):

The Employer will:

- provide awareness and education materials to all workers and volunteers to aid in the prevention of MSD;
- monitor that all employees and volunteers are using safe work practices;
- improve its knowledge of measures to reduce MSD in all work locations; and
- review injury statistics quarterly with the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee to identify work areas with MSD; education of such and a means to reduce any potential injuries.

Supervisor (Section 27, Occupational Health & Safety Act):

The Supervisor will:

- ensure all employees and volunteers perform their tasks in a safe manner through regular audits and making corrections as necessary;
- take every reasonable precaution to protect workers and volunteers;
- educate employees and volunteers on the hazards and provide written measures and procedures as required; and
- lead by example (ie. always direct and perform work in a safe manner themselves).

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Representatives:

Representatives of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee will:

- regularly inspect the workplace to ensure a safe and healthy environment and involve workers, as needed with inspections;
- be trained on MSD and prevention ideas; and
- make recommendations to the Employer on how to eliminate, control or reduce hazards or risks that increase the likelihood that employees and/or volunteers may develop an MSD.

Workers (Sections 28, Occupational Health & Safety Act):

Workers will:

- ensure that safe work practices include good ergonomics and other measures that prevent MSD; this includes properly using all equipment provided by the Employer;
- report to their Supervisor in a timely manner, anything that may be a hazard or risk factor that could cause or contribute to an MSD;
- take part, when requested, in a workplace inspection to advise of any ergonomic hazards or risks; and
- participate in education sessions and comply with safe work procedures.

**Reporting and Investigation:**

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to immediately report all MSD or potential MSD injuries to their immediate Supervisor using the Employee Incident Form. The Supervisor will investigate the MSD or potential MSD, as soon as possible and take appropriate steps to address any continuing risk to the health and well-being of all employees and volunteers.

**Evaluation:**

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to looking at leading indicators of MSD, through surveys to employees and volunteers, and providing continuing education and awareness as necessary. Supervisors will regularly audit employee and volunteer practices related to MSD, as well as review the monthly checklist for any noted hazards and corrections. The Office Accountant will provide the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee with a quarterly summary of all Return to Work Plans. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee will make recommendations to the Employer to identify MSD issues and potential hazards.