

# HEALTHY WORKPLACES

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## Healthy Workplace Campaign

*Working Smart to Prevent  
Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)*

# DRAFT



# HEALTHY WORKPLACES

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### Healthy Workplace Campaign

Healthy Workplace is the theme of a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) campaign for improving work environments in the Wholesale and Retail Trade (WRT) sector. Sector council members such as Association A and Association B have become partners to back the campaign. The *Healthy Workplace Campaign* culminates in the *Healthy Workplace Week of Safety and Health at Work*, scheduled for **April 25–29, 2011**.

The *Healthy Workplace Campaign* will begin in 2011 as an annual series of events to promote improved safety and health in the workplace. The campaign has five strategic objectives: raising awareness, providing information, developing and providing access to resources, encouraging activities that have an impact on the workplace, and identifying and recognizing best practices. Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are the subject of the first *Healthy Workplace Campaign* in 2011, *Working Smart to Prevent MSDs*. This national MSD prevention campaign will promote an integrated management approach to controlling MSDs and will feature the *Best Practice Awards*, which recognize organizations that have made outstanding and innovative contributions to controlling MSDs.

### Why is MSD prevention an issue?

Controlling MSDs, the major work-related health problem in the WRT, is a priority for the sector. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reveal that 32.3% of wholesale workers and 31.2% of retail workers report suffering from backache and muscular pains from overexertion. In addition, controlling MSDs will contribute to achievement of a National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) objective.

### What are MSDs?

Work-related MSDs are impairments of the nerves, tendons, muscles, or bones and disorders affected the back, neck, shoulders, and limbs. These disorders are injuries due to overexertion, overuse, or external forces on such body parts and are classified as strains, sprains or cumulative trauma.

Risk factors may act separately, but the risk of MSDs developing is greater if several risk factors work together. Factors can be divided into three groups: physical; organizational and psychosocial; and individual.

### Examples of These Risks

- Physical—force, repetitive movements, vibration, and awkward postures
- Organizational and psychosocial—repetitive work at a high place, low autonomy

### What are the Best Practice Awards?

The first *Healthy Workplace Campaign, Working Smart to Prevent MSDs*, supports an integrated management approach that includes both prevention of musculoskeletal problems and retention of workers with MSDs at work. It emphasizes “managing the physical and organizational risks,” a concept which covers all the strains being put on the body, as well as the load being carried. Stress, cold working conditions, and a rapid pace of work, among other factors, can all contribute to the development of strains. Therefore, it is important to assess the full range of MSD risks and to address them in a comprehensive way.

The *Healthy Workplace Campaign* also aims to support the retention, rehabilitation, and reintegration of workers who already suffer from MSDs. Particularly important is the

role of social and organizational support in enabling workers both to return to work and subsequently to sustain employment when experiencing MSDs.

An annual recognition program, the *Best Practice Awards*, acknowledges companies and organizations whose practices and policies best address MSD issues.

### Best Practice Examples

- Demonstrate relevance to MSDs
- Minimize risks at source through good management practice and risk assessment
- Show efforts to involve workers effectively
- Go beyond compliance with relevant legislative requirements
- Provide real improvements that are sustainable
- Have potential for transfer to other workplaces

### Benefits for All Applicants

- Feedback and relevant research and management tools.
- All applicants will be eligible to win a free scholarship for Loss Prevention Certification Training.

### Benefits for Winners

In addition to the feedback, reports, and management tools that all applicants receive, NIOSH Best Practice Award honorees receive recognition in the marketplace, in the local community, and among the 21 million WRT members. In addition, winners can use the NIOSH Best Practice logo in recruitment efforts.

### Who can Participate?

Wholesalers and retailers, labor unions, universities, and nonprofit organizations concerned with WRT MSD issues can nominate a candidate or submit an application forms for the *Best Practice Awards*.

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**Working Smart to Prevent MSDs**