

## Development of a New Prevention Guideline for Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)

---

Project update: Feedback from stakeholders on the Introductory Guideline (Quick Start Guide)

March 2018

---

### Comments received to date on the December Posting of the “Introductory Guideline” to the CRE-MSD website

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-of-research-expertise-for-the-prevention-of-musculoskeletal-disorders/development-new-msd-prevention-guide-ontario/reports-and-updates/draft-introductory-guideline>

Richard Wells and Amin Yazdani  
Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018. Revised March 6<sup>th</sup> 2018

*Note: Subsequent to the release of the “Introductory” guideline package in December, in January we renamed and repositioned the Introductory” Guide as a “Quick Start Guide.” We think this makes it simpler... instead of three versions, we only have two (Basic and Comprehensive). It also positions the “Quick Start Guide” for use in any workplace.*

### **Themes in the Feedback**

---

*H= Health and safety system and regulators; E=Employers; W= Workers and Workers’ Representatives; R= Researchers; O= none of the above*

---

#### **Concepts and Framework:**

1. Overall concept has right amount of depth. (H5)
2. Believes Ontario’s small businesses will use these tools. (H6)
3. Liked the overall approach. (H3)
4. Liked the format. (E1)
5. Efficient usage of space. Liked content and format. (R1)
6. Especially liked the format. Seems to be accessible for small businesses. (O1)
7. Posters are “real/understandable, easy to use and compelling”. (H6)
8. Readily accessible posters that can be used by all levels of a company. (E1)
9. Concise and consistent information. (H1)
10. Posters address important topics. (H1)
11. Documents are simple and easy to follow. Very succinct in their message while providing helpful hints and tips to smaller businesses. (H6)
12. Nice job! Looking forward to implementation results and next steps. (R2)
13. Can’t wait for the final materials. I know our company will be using them. (E1)
14. The Guideline Project Introductory Rationale ... I really like it- it is grounded in research yet simplified logically for the target audience, and focused on issues with the potential to have a strong impact on worker safety. I like everything about it – well done! Regarding the Poster ... “Store it off the Floor” – I also like that very much. (E2)
15. [Format] Allows users to divide it up for use in different ways. (H5)
16. Work shouldn’t hurt” poster could be exempted. (H2)
17. Asks how can JHSC members use these guidelines? (H2)

18. Asks if there will be framework that includes key safety concepts to support the guideline. (H4)
19. I am very excited by the approach that distills the concepts into a very user-friendly format. It has been my experience that most employers/ safety committees do not have time to dig into complicated material. You have done a good job of breaking concepts down and I think this will make MSD prevention accessible on a wider scale. (H7)

### Messages/Content

1. Tip 2 – Reaching Strategies – What is being avoided is unclear. A few more words of explanation needed. (H3)
2. No mention of the importance of taking action when workers do report MSD pain and symptoms. (H5)
3. No mention of Work Shouldn't Hurt in the folder. (H5)
4. Headings for strategies should not contain possessive words. (E1)
5. Use only “do” statements and no “don't do” statements. (E1)
6. Do not say “Don't do x. Perhaps say, “Avoid” x. (E2)
7. Overcomplicated title (“Workplace solutions to back pain...”). (H2)
8. Draft MSD Folder – Regulatory info needs to have more clarity with some action words in it. Possible change: “Employers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace under the OHSA. This includes *improving the workplace and implementing measures* to protect workers from hazards related to musculoskeletal disorders.” (H5)
9. Difference between ideas for specific tips and strategy sections unclear. (H1)
10. Posters have strong focus on controls. (H4)
11. Posters are good but should be targeted to specific sectors/industries. (H2)
12. Myth Busters – Too optimistic about solutions as some risk factors cannot be removed (H2)
13. Myth Busters – Mainly viewpoints from manager/owner perspective. May not see true nature of problem/solution. (H2)
14. Problem with “Better health & safety...” statement. Paragraph needs reworking (H2)
15. “Work shouldn't hurt” poster could be exempted. (H2)
16. Asked if distinguishing between things worker can do and what employer can do is worth it. (H1)
17. Avoid language that suggests workers have control over things they don't control. For example, “stop lifting” suggests that workers can make this change, when in most cases, manual lifting is part of the job design and not something workers control. (H6)
18. Add information on recognizing and assessing risks in framework. (H4)
19. Use plain language, the active voice and simple graphics. Hazard-based language and content. (H6)
20. Tie any evaluative tools (eg, rubric to assess the implementation of an MSD prevention program in large organizations) to the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act rather than devising alternative criteria. The Act sets out unequivocal minimum legal requirements. (H6)
21. Add information for risk factor identification (H2)
22. Include awareness information as well as what to do and how to do it. Include a range of hazards (eg work organization, psycho-social), focus on root causes and emphasize the hierarchy of controls. (H6)
23. “Did you know...” section where it says, “There is no safe way for your back to lift from the ground”. From an employer point of view this is a little alarming. Alternate; “risk of injury is higher when lifting from the floor than from waist level even if you “bend your knees” or “lift with your legs”...”(E2)
24. “Ideas for a healthy back” – the wording “Don't work at floor level” is a bit strong – I suggest something like “avoid working at floor level whenever possible (or “whenever you can”): use tables...”. (E2)
25. “Don't work at floor level” is a bit strong – I suggest something like “avoid working at floor level whenever possible (or “whenever you can”): use tables...”. (E2)
26. Remove “regularly” from Work Shouldn't Hurt poster. Reads, “We all suffer occasional pain and discomfort at work, but Work Shouldn't Hurt.” (W1)
27. Where is information about office work? (E3)
28. Need more information about manual materials handling; perhaps its own poster (E3)

29. The 2016 EIPAC survey found that most workplace changes are achieved through the efforts and recommendations of joint committees and health and safety representatives in small workplaces. The Guideline should assist in this. (H6)
30. Incorporate updated, easy-to-use tools and materials from the previous version of the guideline, with advice or criteria on when to use each tool. (H6)
31. promote workplace changes instead of ineffective worker-focused solutions such as lifting techniques; avoid lists of “don’ts”. (H6)
32. Micro-businesses and others may have trouble focusing on workplace hazards and may seek worker-oriented or worker-blaming solutions; therefore use terminology that focuses on hazards, eg “identify hazards” and “fix hazards.” (EIPAC adopted a guiding principle that “all campaigns, examples, case studies, stories, etc. are to focus on hazards and solutions rather than blaming workers for injuries.”). (H6)
33. Use the Occupational Health and Safety Act’s terms and language, eg use “hazards, employers, supervisors, workers, JHSC and health and safety representatives” rather than “problems, stakeholders, risk teams and selected workers.” This will help to avoid misleading employers about their legal duties. (H6)
34. Consider how the five-step approach in the draft documents tie in with the “identify, assess and control” approach used in mandatory worker and supervisor health and safety awareness training and how to link with mandatory training programs. (H6)
35. Tip 7 – Add info worker involvement and input. (H1)
36. Emphasize the importance of involving workers by encouraging them to submit injury reports, listening and responding to their hazard and discomfort reports and by soliciting their ideas and feedback on workplace changes. Include the three worker rights to know, participate and refuse unsafe work. (H6)
37. Support training for joint health and safety committees (JHSC) and health and safety representatives so they can learn how to use the tools and information in the guideline. (H6)

### Suggestions

1. Hands Below Head and Look Straight Ahead – Neither of the posters “mention balancing out the work time with other worker that allows the hands to be closer to waist level.” Posters also do not mention the use of micropauses and occasional joint motions of the neck and shoulders in the opposite directions to how they are being used in the work. (H5)
2. Include MOL Prevention Office logo on documents. (H2)
3. Tip 5 – Show more of the forearm in the first picture to provide a better idea of a “natural” posture. (H3)
4. Tip 5 – Thumb might be shown incorrectly – Too much flexion. (H3)
5. Tip 4 – Include info about glare. (H1)
6. Include posters for prevention strategies (“get help”, “get materials handling devices”, weight limits, proper PPE). (H2)
7. More prevention strategies needed. (H2)
8. Incorporate info on training in workplaces. (H2)
9. Tip 1 – Usage of low cart to slide heavy item directly onto low shelf to avoid lifting – “A low shelf can be suitable for heavier items if they can be slid directly across from a low cart to the shelf”.
10. Tip 1 – Workers also round shoulders, which contributes to a rounded back. Change of wording: “Lift like a weight lifter. Bend at your hips, keep the natural back curve: butt out, “proud chest”, don’t round your back and shoulders.”. (H3)
11. Tip 3 – A working strategy could be: “Plan your work. If overhead work is anticipated obtain an appropriate, safe, raised work surface, or tool extension”. (H3)
12. Tip 6 – Meaning of “Provide “working rest” by performing multiple tasks” is not quite clear. Possible changes: “Provide working rest by regularly switching between multiple tasks” or “Provide working rest by regularly switching between tasks that use different muscles and work actions”. (H3)
13. Tip 7 – “Use the diagram above to help map patterns of pain and discomfort” – Could be changed to “...map locations and patterns”. (H3)
14. Tip 7 – Possible point for “What to do if you have pain” – “Take note of the postures and movements you are doing, and tools/equipment you are using to help possible causes of your pain”. (H3)

15. Draft MSD Folder – Final paragraph of first page – “This includes identifying and controlling hazards related to Musculoskeletal disorders. (H3)
16. Get a Grip – Could include “Choose a tool that when gripped doesn’t cause pressure point on your fingers or palm” on first page.
17. Get a Grip – On the second page, a possible suggestion is that people should not use their hand as a vice. Example: “If you have to hold an object in place with our hand to work on it, consider using a tool or clamp to secure it instead of your hand”. (H5)
18. “Don’t work at floor level” is a bit strong – I suggest something like “avoid working at floor level whenever possible (or “whenever you can”): use tables...” Also, can we put the last point first? (“Use (insert carts), lift assist devices, hand trucks - to avoid actually lifting items yourself (suggest “by hand” ). This is more consistent with prioritizing eliminating the hazard before controlling it. (E2)
19. For Poster 1, note that this advice is specifically for moving objects by hand (E2)
20. Consider naming the website “Work Shouldn’t Hurt” to align with the system’s slogan for MSD prevention. (H6)
21. Consider translating the guideline into multiple languages. (H6)
22. The self-assessment rubric for large organizations has five assessment categories; this might be too ambitious. Consider providing a simple checklist with questions to assess the quality of the health and safety policy and program, using the Act’s requirements as an anchor. (H6)
23. Pg 2: I am not sure, but the word “objects” after a few times reads strangely. How about parcels, packages, items, heavy products?? You use the word “products” on page 4 under Making a Start. (R3)
24. How to Use the Poser; bullet 2: Use the posters as a script to help supervisors and other with safety or tool box talks. (R3)
25. Page 3: Step 3: Make the change, but expect a delay since other processes may be affected by the change. (R3)
26. Proficient could be replaced with “familiar with”. (R3)

### Editorial Changes

- Noted

---

*H= Health and safety system and regulators; E=Employers; W= Workers and Workers’ Representatives; R= Researchers; O= none of the above*

---

### **Thank you all for your time and for sharing your expertise. We received very useful feedback.**

Some general comments on the feedback:

- There was strong agreement that the framework, the scope and the content in the package were right for the target audience (small and micro)
- This is one part of the Guideline and the other 2 parts (BASIC and COMPREHENSIVE) will address many of the issues of completeness. It is more a matter of getting the most important information into these materials; some things had to be left out of this version.
- Subsequent to the release of the “Introductory” guideline package in December, we have renamed and repositioned the Introductory” Guide as a “Quick Start Guide.” We think this makes it simpler... instead of three versions, we only have two (Basic and Comprehensive). It also positions the “Quick Start Guide” for use any workplace. There will be links to the other two versions as well as using similar language.
- We think that the hard copy INTRODUCTORY package, especially the posters, could be used in all sorts of settings and sized firms for tool box talks etc. The web version of the Introductory guideline is planned to include the documents as pdf, but it will have more information.
- The “change it up poster” applies to all the posters 1-6 and talks about time related issues: recovery/micro-pauses/rotation. This should be made clearer

- The “Work shouldn’t hurt” poster is a very important component, based upon our consultations.
- Posters 1 & 2 uses the language “...don’t lift...” We were thinking of using the language “...avoid lifting...” This is similar to “Avoid Noise.” “Even under ideal conditions (load is waist high, close to your belly button and only lifted occasionally), avoid lifting more than 23kg (50lb) by hand.”
- Further feedback recommended changing “avoid” to “control.” New version: “Even under ideal conditions (load is waist high, close to your belly button and only lifted occasionally), control lifting more than 23kg (50lb) by hand.” This is parallel to the change from “Avoid Noise” to “Control Noise.”
- For now, the Guideline is generic... not sector/industry specific. Going forward, we can work perhaps on different versions. We are experimenting with using the same format for a specific type of workplace; the “Office.”