

# TRUCKING

Safety education for provided by the insurance specialists at: Lawley

## TARGET → ON SAFETY

### Ergonomics for Drivers

#### Introduction

Drivers face many conditions that can lead to pain and injury, including long hours in the same position and relentless road vibration. Getting hurt on the job is preventable, however. Taking a look at the study of ways to prevent injury from factors drivers face, known as ergonomics, makes it evident if you pay enough attention to prevention, you could save yourself pain, lost time at work or even a career-threatening disability.

#### Musculoskeletal Disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders can develop either suddenly or over time, causing debilitating pain and resulting in lost time and wages at work. The most common pains come from strains in the shoulders, lower back, head, neck, hands and eyes due to one or

more of four primary risk factors that commercial drivers must often confront: awkward postures, excessive force, repetitive motion or contact stress. The way employees lift and move their bodies is a major contributing factor in various disorders.

#### Inside Your Cab

Your cab may determine your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder over time. Improper positioning in your seat can cause various disorders by causing you to reach or strain unnecessarily on the road. If you are in an uncomfortable position when driving or must awkwardly reach for materials inside your cab, your risk of developing a disorder is much higher. However, if you follow several basic guidelines while on the road, you can stay pain- and injury-free.

Many commercial vehicles' seats and cabs are equipped with ergonomic features that often go unused because they can be quite complicated. Read all instruction manuals thoroughly to educate yourself about these features, and take advantage of them. When you properly adjust your seat and steering wheel, you greatly reduce your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder.

#### Stretch it Out

Moving the body in ways it is not ready to move and using muscle groups that haven't been warmed up for work can be a major cause of pain. There is real value in practicing basic stretching exercises for our hands, wrists, back and neck to prepare our bodies for work.

Begin with your hands and wrists, stretching them thoroughly for driving position. Stretch your neck gently from side to side and then from front to back. Stretch your back while sitting by bending your chin toward your knees. Do these exercises before, after and during each trip you take.

## Regular Breaks

Although there are many ways to avoid musculoskeletal disorders, repetitive motion injuries and other ergonomic-related problems, one of the best ways to prevent pain is to recognize that muscles require periodic rest.

Although you may have a pressing schedule to respect, taking the few minutes necessary to stretch and care for your body will allow you to work many more hours in the long term. Moving around periodically ensures good circulation and reduces your risk of musculoskeletal disorders.

Pull over and take regular breaks to stretch and rest your muscles. Walk around and stretch your arms, legs, shoulders, neck and hands on a regular basis. A little common sense can go a long way in reducing your risk of pain and lost wages in the long term.

## Help Us Help You

If you feel the way that your workstation is set up needs reviewing, remember to bring this information to your supervisor's attention. The company is very

interested in making sure that everyone is able to work without pain. If you have any questions regarding ergonomics or your work area, speak up.

