



# AMERIND Risk

*Tribes Protecting Tribes*



## TRIBAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION NEWSLETTER

*A message from  
the Chief Executive Officer*



**Derek Valdo**

Guuwaadzi' Haubaa!

Determining a safe environment starts with a mindset across the board in the workplace. In this issue of our newsletter, we provide tips on ergonomics. Provide these tips to employees to promote a healthy workspace.

Please feel free to call any one of our staff for questions. We are here to help. And we appreciate you choosing AMERIND Risk as your insurance carrier. Your continued loyalty is more than just business—its protection of our assets and our people. Tribes protecting tribes is a way of life.

Thank you again for your loyalty.

Sincerely,

Derek Valdo, CEO  
AMERIND Risk

*AMERIND Risk Reminders During National Safety Month*

## Ergo Injuries ... Feeling The Strain

**H**ave you ever wondered why you felt a dull aching pain or stiffness in your shoulder or perhaps a lower back strain at the end of the day? The problem may be from the nature of the work you perform all day, and how long you do it without variation or a rest break. If you work in an office setting all day at your desk or on a computer for example the discomfort may be caused by your body posture. You are not alone. Currently about one-third of all the reported injuries to AMERIND Risk the last few years are ergonomic strains and sprains. These injuries have been reported by employees using computers, housekeepers and maids making up beds, and trades personnel engaged in various forms of lifting activities.

These strains and sprains are components of ergonomics, the health science of designing our work activities and the workplace to suit our individual capabilities and limitations. The good news is that it can be a fairly routine process to bring immediate relief and comfort. Let's review some of the causes and conditions that are involved and easy solutions to ease you along the trail to wellness.

Let's look at Musculoskeletal Disorders (or MSD's) first. These injuries can be chronic in nature, that is, extending over a long period of time. For example, a herniated spinal disc is a tear which can cause pain or numbness in your lower back. This may have been caused by heavy lifting or excessive twisting or bending. If you are engaged in moving

heavy objects, furniture, equipment, these activities can damage your spine or strain muscles in your back and shoulders. If you are working in construction or facilities operations, using power tools or unpadded hand tools without gloves, you too could be experiencing pain in your hands or arms.

Another variety of ergonomic injuries is labelled as Repetitive Motion Injuries. These injuries can be caused by prolonged and excessive exposures of repeated motions over and over again. Employees working at desks with a keyboard are susceptible to these types of injuries. Carpenters using hammers or other tools hour after hour are susceptible too. We are all engaged in many different work activities and job functions, but many of the basic motions and body positions remain very similar. We use different tools in performing our work, but exert the same forces based on how we hold our grip on those tools.

What can we do to bring comfort and healing to all these aches and pains? There are several proven techniques and solutions that are used throughout industry. They are available for us, to adapt ourselves physically to the work we are performing or to modify our workplace to make it more comfortable. We can even change the nature of the work we are doing and even how long we do it.

Let's assess some of the possibilities. Obviously we cannot cover every ergonomic condition or remedy in a comprehensive manner in a brief newsletter. But we can consider some of usual, routine issues.

## Safety Tips

### Heavy Lifting

- Get close to the load
- Keep your back straight while lifting
- Tighten your stomach muscles
- Lift with your legs
- Pivot, don't twist.
- Or simply get help for a two-person (or assisted) lift if the load is just too heavy. We have different capabilities. But If the load is over the 40-50 pound range, you should consider asking for some help or use mechanical means.

### At Your Desk

- Arrange your work so you can sit or stand comfortably in a position that does not put stress on any specific area of your body. Keep your neck in a neutral position and minimize the need to look up or to the sides continuously while you are working.
- Eliminate most movement from your waist. Keep the workstation and tools within reach without having to lean, bend, or twist at the waist frequently.

- Vary postures, if possible.
- Take 10- to 15-second breaks frequently throughout your task. For example, look away from your computer monitor, stand up, or stretch your arms. Short breaks reduce eyestrain and buildup of muscle tension.
- Stretch your body by getting up out of your chair and stretching your arms, shoulders, back, and legs. When you are sitting, shrug and relax your shoulders.



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### Construction Trades

Stretch and flex each morning to warm up muscles and help prevent soft-tissue injuries. Instructional charts can be easily accessed on the internet and even customized to suit your needs

### For Most Employees

Implement rest or stretch breaks to provide an opportunity to counteract any repeated or sustained awkward postures and allow for adequate recovery time.

### Benefits of Early Reporting

- Prompt reporting enables early investigation of the causes and formulation of appropriate health and safety control measures.
- Prompt reporting of injury and illness can also ensure that immediate assistance can be given to the affected person, such as proper medical treatment.

### Promote Safety in Your Community

You can be a member of our safety team by sharing this information and learnings with your friends, relatives, coworkers, etc. Injury prevention takes a team effort to bring the healing and recovery that everyone can share and enjoy.

### AMERIND Risk Can Help

The AMERIND Risk Safety Services Team can provide valuable assistance and training material to assist you. We are committed to the reduction and elimination of workplace injuries and hazards within the Native communities. We actively promote workplace health and well-being that can be a benefit in our personal lives and for our loved ones at home as the basis of establishing growth and prosperity within our communities.

For more information, contact

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