

MODULE 1 – MSI Signs and Symptoms – Early Recognition and What to Do

What are MSI?

- MSI are “musculoskeletal injuries” - soft tissue injuries caused or made worse by work

What causes MSI?

- Sometimes a single incident – usually forceful exertion (e.g., heavy lifting)
- Sometimes gradual onset – usually awkward postures that are repeated with lower force

What are the Signs and Symptoms of MSI?

- Signs can be seen: swelling, redness, bruising, or limited ability to move.
- Symptoms are felt but not seen: pain, aching, tingling, numbness, fatigue or weakness.
- Signs and symptoms
 - may occur suddenly or begin gradually.
 - may be noticed during work or at home.
 - may worsen or become permanent if there is no change in how work is performed.

What are some Common MSI and their Signs and Symptoms?

- Tendonitis: Damage to tendons – usually in the hand, arm, or shoulder
 - Pain, weakness, swelling at the tendon that is affected – worse when using it
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (nerve entrapment): Damage to nerves at the wrist
 - Pain, numbness, tingling in fingers, hand or wrist – often worse at night
- Low Back Pain: Damage to tissues in the lower back – muscle, ligament or disc
 - Pain or muscles “seizing” in the lower back (where the injury is)
 - Pain, numbness, tingling, weakness in the legs or feet (where nerves in the back go)

What do you do if you have MSI signs or symptoms?

- Do something. Don’t ignore it or try to “work through it”. The earlier you respond, the better.
- Report signs, symptoms or concerns to a supervisor or safety rep as soon as you notice it.
- Review information about MSI hazards and controls in your work.
- Look for things in your work that may make it worse (MSI hazards).
- Look for ways to work that protect your body and limit exposure to things that make it worse.
- Seek medical assistance if signs and symptoms are severe, getting worse, or not improving.

Discussion or Follow-up:

1. Has anyone had an MSI such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome or low back pain?
 - a. What was that like for you?
 - b. How long did it take to get better?
 - c. Did you have to change how you worked at all?
2. Does anyone currently have any MSI signs or symptoms?
 - a. What seems to make it worse in your work?
 - b. What are you doing at work to prevent it from getting worse?
 - c. Have you reported it? (ensure that it is reported)
3. Who do you talk to if you have concerns about MSI signs, symptoms or risk of injury?