



Hazardous manual tasks Psychological Risk Factors

Research has shown a direct relationship between psychological workplace risk factors and the development of a musculoskeletal injury or sprain/strain.

The following are the main types of psychological risk factors:

Organisational Change

Changes (internal or external) that impact on relationships between employees can occur at three levels:

- personal (i.e. changes to position and responsibilities);
- management (i.e. new supervisors or processes and procedures); and
- organisational (i.e. takeover, restructure or redundancies).

Work Organisation

Poorly structured and organised work can contribute to a stressful work environment. Aspects to consider include:

- work pressures including time, physical and emotional demands of the work;
- job role conflict such as reporting to two supervisors;
- unclear job roles such as two people being allocated the same task to perform;
- lack of control over work for example, when the task is done and how it is done; and
- physical aspects of the work environment including noise, heat and coldness.

Organisational Culture

A workplace culture that permits or rewards unsafe behaviour or the taking of short cuts may contribute to injuries. For example one that allows

- taking short cuts;
- not using appropriate equipment;
- unhealthy work relationships including bullying;
- lack of support from supervisors; and
- perception some people are treated differently to others.

Leadership

Two styles of leadership that are associated with unsafe workplace behaviour:

- **authoritarian style** - [autocratic] characterised by a leader having control over all decisions based on their own knowledge and ideas, with little input or consultation from others.
- **laissez-faire style** - is based on a leader who exerts minimal control and delegates decision making to employees, with little guidance, supervision or input.

