

# SAFETY BULLETIN

## *Overview of SDSU Research Foundation (SDSURF) Injury and Illness Prevention Program*

[www.foundation.sdsu.edu](http://www.foundation.sdsu.edu)

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### **What is the Injury and Illness Prevention Program?**

The Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) is a required formal, written program, which strives to improve worker health and safety. The program is aimed at preventing or reducing work-related injuries and illnesses. SDSU Research Foundation (SDSURF) has adopted systems to:

- Identify and correct workplace hazards and unsafe conditions
- Properly investigate and report accidents
- Establish a means of communication between SDSURF and the employees for matters concerning health and safety
- Properly train and educate employees on health and safety matters
- Enable employees to report safety hazards and suggest safety related improvements without fear of reprisal

The IIPP is not a program that requires all-new safety-related activities. Many of the activities mandated by this program have been in place for some time at SDSURF.

### **Who Is Covered By the IIPP?**

The type of IIPP mandated by Cal/OSHA is specifically geared toward worker safety. Therefore, all employees, including project staff of SDSURF fall under the program. Still, SDSURF strives to provide the same level of safety and health protection to employees and non-employees alike. Injury and Illness Prevention Programs are required by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Industrial Relations (Cal/OSHA).

### **How Does the IIPP Work?**

The IIPP is an involved program requiring the interest and partnership of all employees at SDSURF. While the Risk Manager and Director of Human Resources at SDSURF maintains overall responsibility for the program, each employee plays an important role in health and safety in the workplace. A Safety Committee has been established to act as a liaison between management and the employees. This Committee, which includes several representatives from various areas of SDSURF, acts to ensure that employees have a means of addressing health and safety concerns. Employees are encouraged to provide their input to the Safety Committee. The details of the program as well as an outline of individual areas of responsibility are available by obtaining a copy of the IIPP from the Risk Management Department.

### **Where Can Employees Find Out More About The IIPP?**

Employees having questions about the IIPP should contact the Risk Management Department at 619-594-0858. Employees may also obtain a complete copy of the IIPP from the Risk Management Department.

**Foreign Travel  
Risk Management must be notified in writing 30 days before any travel into a foreign territory.**

### **REPORTING WORKPLACE HAZARDS**

All employees have a responsibility for reporting any unsafe condition or hazard that they discover in the workplace to their supervisor or to the Director of Facilities Mgmt., at 619-594-0276 or Risk Mgmt., at 619-594-0858. Employees may do so without fear of reprisal and will not be disciplined, discharged or suffer any adverse personnel actions for reporting these conditions.

The employee's report should include:

- The location of the condition believed to be unsafe or hazardous
- The date and time the condition or hazard was observed
- A description of the unsafe condition or hazard

Employees may also include any recommendations they may have for correcting the reported unsafe condition or hazard.

The Risk Mgr. or Director of Facilities Mgmt. will respond to each employee report by investigating the reported unsafe condition or hazard. When appropriate, employees will receive a response explaining the action that was taken to correct the condition. Alternatively, the report will explain why the condition was not found to be unsafe or hazardous.

Employees who would like to submit their report anonymously should submit the appropriate information to the Director of Facilities Management.

## PROPER TECHNIQUES IN THE WORKPLACE: WORKING WITH VDT'S

Most of us have jobs that require us to use a video display terminal (VDT) for word processing, creating graphs, composing newsletters or data entry. Creating a suitable workstation can help you avoid some of the common health problems associated with constant work at a VDT. Some health problems experienced by some users include eyestrain, neck and back pain, hand, wrist and elbow pain, stress, tension headaches, dizziness, tension, nausea, and irritability.

Constant use of a computer keyboard may cause stress and strain known as repetitive motion injuries (RMI). Casual VDT users normally avoid the effects of RMI, however, constant, steady use of a keyboard can cause injury. VDT's don't cause these problems directly, but how they are set up and used can lead to these symptoms. Workstation design and simple user techniques can help eliminate most problems. Here are some possible steps you can take to minimize your chance of being effected.

### ◆CHAIRS◆



Adjust the chair to allow thighs to rest parallel to the floor, slide hips all the way back in the chair, feet flat on the floor. Footrests should be used if the chair is too tall. The chair should support the lower back, but a cushion or rolled towel can be placed against the lower back if that adjustment is not available.

Remember that different tasks require different postures. When entering data, you need to lean slightly forward so you can read the copy easier. When you review information on the screen you can lean back slightly more. Remember to eliminate neck and eyestrain, keep your head straight and eyes parallel to the top of the screen.

### ◆KEYBOARDS◆



The keyboard should be placed at a height that allows the upper arms to hang comfortably, with lower arms and wrists forming a 90-degree angle at the elbow, parallel to the floor. Wrists should be fairly straight in a neutral position. Wrist and lower armrests may help maintain this position and protect the palms from resting on the sharp edge of the keyboard. A padded wrist rest may provide some users greater comfort.

Keyboard slope should be flat or slightly negatively sloped. This will help keep your wrists as straight as possible. Use minimum force for striking keys. The mouse should be next to and at the same level as the keyboard.

### ◆VDT POSITION◆



The Video Display Terminal (VDT) should be placed directly behind the keyboard with the top of the screen at or slightly below eye level. The screen should be tilted to avoid glare. Monitor riser(s) or like items can help achieve this result. The screen should be 16 inches to 28 inches from the user's eyes and should not reflect glare from lights or windows.

Sometimes, lighting that is dimmer than used for other tasks is needed. Special shield or glasses may be needed. Also, placing the screen close to a blank wall can help prevent glare. Materials to be copied should be placed in front of the user at the same height as the screen. Document-holders may be useful.

### ◆BREAKS◆



VDT users, working for long periods of time on the VDT, need to schedule frequent mini breaks and practice hand and neck exercises. While working at your workstation, you can also take a vision break every twenty minutes or so.

Changing focus allows your eyes a chance to relax. Simply glance across the room or out the window from time to time, and look at an object at least 20 feet away. You can also try at-your-desk exercises like shrugging your shoulders slowly, stretching your head from side to side or relaxing your fingers and wrists. For more exercises call Risk Management at 619-594-0858.



## PROPER LIFTING

**People injure their backs on the job more than any other body part. You can prevent back injuries and pain by following some basic lifting techniques.**

- ✓ Assess the task, load and process. Before you lift, think about the load and weight. Can you lift it alone? Is mechanical help needed? Is it too awkward for one person, should you ask for help? Use hand trucks or dollies if available. Break larger loads up into smaller loads.
- ✓ Assure pathway is clear.
- ✓ Make sure footing is solid and get a good grip.
- ✓ Keep back straight and vertical to the ground upon lifting the center your body over your feet.
- ✓ Bend knees when lifting. Avoid bending at the waist and do not stoop over the object.
- ✓ Lift the object using leg muscles not your back muscles. With your stomach firm and knees bent, let the large muscles in your legs support your back and carry the weight.
- ✓ Keep the load close to you. "Hug" the Load -- try to hold the object you're lifting as close to your body as possible, as you gradually straighten your legs to a standing position.
- ✓ Move your whole body as you go. If you need to turn while holding the object, don't twist, turn by moving your feet in the direction you intend to go.

**WARNING:** You should never attempt any lifting when you are experiencing back pain. If you can't get someone to assist you with the lift, you are better off leaving the task undone until you can. Attempting the lift yourself in order to save a few minutes now could cost you many hours of pain and discomfort later if your back is not capable of handling the load.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE INJURED ON THE JOB

Employees are our most valuable resource. SDSURF endeavors to provide a safe and healthy work environment and we encourage you to help us prevent work hazards and injuries to employees. When the unfortunate happens, our intention is to see that employees receive prompt, competent medical attention, and return to work as quickly as possible.

Prompt reporting of any work related injury or illness is important. Benefits cannot begin until SDSURF is aware of the circumstances of the incident. Ensure your right to benefits by reporting every on the job injury, no matter how slight you may think it is. Even a cut finger can lead to a more serious condition if infection develops.

### If it is a medical emergency

In emergency situations, seek medical treatment immediately at the nearest medical facility equipped to handle emergencies. This may include calling 911. A medical emergency is generally defined as a sudden and unforeseeable injury or illness of such a nature that failure to get immediate medical care could be life threatening or cause serious harm to bodily functions. Some examples include severe bleeding from any site, loss of consciousness, seizures, or severe or multiple injuries. The injury should be reported within 8 hours to SDSURF Human Resources at 619-594-1051 or 619-594-4139

### If it is a non-emergency situation

For non-emergency situations and before seeking medical treatment, call SDSURF Human Resources at 619-594-1051 or 619-594-4139 to report the injury within 24 hours. Be prepared to know when and where the injury occurred, what happened, and who witnessed the incident. If medical treatment is necessary, the SDSURF Human Resources Department will direct you to a medical facility that specializes in the treatment of industrial accidents and injuries. All medical bills and reports will be sent to SDSURF's workers' compensation carrier.

If you report an injury or illness, you will be given a simple claim form which the law requires you to complete by describing what, where, and how the accident or injury occurred. This Employee Claim Form will be used to report the injury or illness to the workers' compensation carrier. The workers' compensation carrier makes the final determination of whether your injury is work-related and what benefits you are entitled to receive. In most cases benefits are provided immediately. However, the workers' compensation carrier may need to investigate the facts surrounding the injury before beginning to pay benefits. (see *YOUR BENEFITS...*, P4)

## YOUR BENEFITS UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION

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California workers' compensation law guarantees certain benefits to employees who are injured or become ill because of their job. This coverage is automatic and there is no qualifying period and no need to earn a certain amount in wages before you are covered. Protection begins when you first start on the job.

The benefits provided by workers' compensation coverage are for medical treatment, payment of lost wages and rehabilitation. Medical treatment, as necessary to treat a job-related injury or illness, is covered by our workers' compensation carrier. Medical bills authorized for payment are not subject to a deductible or an annual or lifetime dollar amount.

In addition, when you are temporarily disabled by a job injury or illness, you may be entitled to receive tax-free income until the treating physician determines that you are able to return to work. Time lost for medical and therapy appointments are not considered as temporary disability periods and should be recorded as sick time, if available. Payments for lost wages are two-thirds of your average weekly pay, up to a maximum set by state law. There is a three-day waiting period before benefit payments begin; however, the waiting period will be waived if you are hospitalized or unable to work for more than 14 days.

## BE PREPARED IN CASE OF FIRE

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Fire is the major cause of accidental loss of life in the home. About 2 million fires are reported each year in the U.S., resulting in 6,000 deaths. Of course, prevention is the best solution. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, better public education, coupled with wider use of smoke detectors, could prevent or reduce the severity of 80% of building fires.

Are you prepared to respond to a building fire? Your supervisor should instruct you on the escape routes for your working area. Each employee should take the responsibility to know the escape route and meeting place in the event of a fire or other emergency. Remember, following good housekeeping practices and keeping work areas free from fire hazards will serve to prevent fires. Also, be sure to obey "no smoking" rules.

In public buildings, such as SDSURF, the first thing you should do upon discovery of a fire is to alert building occupants for evacuation. This should involve both activation of the building emergency alarm and verbal notification. Then call Campus Emergency (Public Safety) at 911, and evacuate the building.

You may attempt to extinguish the fire with a portable extinguisher, but only if the following conditions can be met:

- The fire is small ("trash can" size or smaller).
- The building alarm has been activated and Public Safety notified (Note: activating the building alarm does NOT automatically notify Public Safety).
- You can understand the use of the fire extinguisher.
- You can attempt to extinguish the fire and still maintain a safe escape route toward an exit.

Assistance in assessing an area for fire safety can be obtained by calling the Facilities Management Department at 619-594-0276.

## CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD COMMUNICATION

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A significant element when maintaining the safety and health of the employees is establishing an awareness of hazardous chemicals found in the workplace. An integral part of working safely with chemicals and understanding their effects is the Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS.

The MSDS are prepared by the manufacturer on chemicals that may be potentially hazardous. The MSDS provide data regarding fire hazards, emergency handling, special precautions and hazardous ingredients, to name just a few. MSDS are required to be available for all hazardous chemicals found in

the work environment and accessible to all employees.

A repository of MSDS is maintained and they are available to you upon request. If you wish to request an MSDS for a substance found in your work environment, please contact Risk Management at 619-594-0858.