Ergonomics for Hospitality General Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

In the hospitality industry, neglecting ergonomics can have significant consequences for businesses and their employees. Uncomfortable workstations, repetitive motions, and improper lifting techniques can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) among staff, resulting in increased absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher healthcare costs for the business.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

For hospitality staff, ignoring ergonomics is a recipe for trouble. Repetitive tasks, awkward postures, and heavy lifting all contribute to painful musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) like back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome. This can lead to a domino effect of staff discomfort, lower productivity, and even higher healthcare costs.

Hazards by Staff Role:

Food Service:

- Carrying heavy trays (risk of back pain, leg fatigue).
- Repetitive cutting and chopping motions (risk of carpal tunnel syndrome).
- Standing for long periods (risk of leg fatigue, varicose veins).
- Working in hot kitchens (risk of heat stress).

Front Desk Staff:

- Sitting for long periods with poor posture (risk of neck and back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome).
- Repetitive typing (risk of carpal tunnel syndrome).

- Working with computers for extended periods (risk of eye strain, headaches).

Maintenance Staff:

- Lifting heavy tools (risk of back injuries).
- Working in awkward positions (risk of muscle strain).
- Using vibrating equipment (risk of carpal tunnel syndrome).

Waitstaff:

- Carrying heavy trays (risk of back pain, leg fatigue).
- Walking long distances (risk of leg fatigue).
- Bending and reaching to serve guests (risk of muscle strain).
- Working long hours (risk of fatigue, stress)

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. Proactive Hazard Identification and Assessment:

- **Conduct ergonomic evaluations:** Partner with qualified professionals to identify potential hazards in the workplace through comprehensive assessments. This might involve evaluating workstation layouts, equipment design, task demands, and environmental factors impacting staff posture and movement.

2. Invest in Ergonomic Solutions:

- **Ergonomically designed furniture and equipment:** Replace conventional chairs with ones offering proper lumbar support and adjustability. Provide lightweight tools, non-slip flooring, and adjustable workstations to promote comfortable and neutral postures.
- **Lifting and carrying assistance:** Implement the use of mechanical lifting aids, dollies, and carts to reduce the physical strain of transporting heavy items.

3. Implement Safe Work Practices:

- **Safe lifting techniques training:** Train staff on proper

lifting techniques, emphasizing the importance of using leg muscles, keeping objects close to the body, and avoiding twisting or bending at the waist. Encourage seeking assistance for heavy objects exceeding individual capacity.

- **Regular breaks and stretching:** Schedule regular breaks throughout the workday to allow staff to move around, stretch their muscles, and change positions. Encourage light stretching exercises to prevent muscle fatigue and promote blood circulation.

4. Address Role-Specific Risks:

- **Housekeeping:** Utilize lightweight cleaning tools, wear slip-resistant shoes, and alternate tasks to avoid prolonged bending or reaching.
- **Food Service:** Utilize equipment like carts and dollies to transport heavy items, rotate tasks to reduce repetitive motions, and wear comfortable, non-slip shoes with good arch support.
- **Front Desk Staff:** Adjust chair height and monitor position to maintain proper posture, take frequent breaks to stand up and move around, and use an ergonomic keyboard and mouse to minimize wrist strain.
- **Maintenance Staff:** Use mechanical lifting aids whenever possible, utilize tools with extended handles to avoid awkward postures, and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for specific tasks.

FINAL WORD

Consistent implementation of these measures and a commitment to a culture of safety are essential for preventing and minimizing ergonomic injuries in the hospitality industry.