

safety Manufacturing Toolbox Talks matters

From your safety partners at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd**

Ergonomics Precautions for Sheet Metal Workers

Working with sheet metal can put a lot of strain on your body. Many daily tasks cause fatigue, discomfort or pain when they are done repeatedly. For instance, when you exert force to use a tool, reach overhead, stand in the same position for an extended period of time or experience pressure from a hard surface, you run the risk of injury. However, there are many things you can do to reduce those risks and remain healthy on the job.

One of the most beneficial precautions you can take before starting your working day is to stretch much like an athlete would before a race or a game. Start by walking or marching in place for five minutes. Then, do several arm circles followed by slowly stretching your legs, arms, shoulders and knees. It may sound silly, but it will get your blood pumping and your muscles ready to work.

Safety Tips

Once you're done stretching, it's time to get to work. Here are some easy safety alternatives that reduce the risk of injury:

- Keep your wrists straight by using an angled tool or re-position the material to avoid bending at the wrist.
- Create a workbench that allows you to stand upright instead of kneeling.
- Centre yourself and move as close as possible to work done overhead. Do not try to reach and extend a hand tool far away from your body.
- Choose power tools over hand tools when possible to avoid excess strain.
- Change body positions frequently and alternate tasks to rest muscle groups.

- Increase the diameter on bucket handles by adding padding to lessen your grip and the strain on your hands.
- Bring loads close to your body when attempting to pick them up.
- Use mechanical aids and ask fellow employees for help carrying heavy loads.

Lacerations

As a sheet metal worker, you also run the risk of getting dangerous cuts. Many workers have lost fingers and hands during everyday tasks. It is wise to wear gloves while working with sheet metal. Though gloves do reduce your dexterity and the ability to move your fingers easily, they will prevent these types of dangerous injuries.

Warning Signs of Injury

Tell a supervisor if you experience the following symptoms:

- Constant fatigue
- Cold hands
- Swelling
- Numbness or shooting pains
- Tingling
- Changes in skin colour
- Loss of sensation

You may need to seek medical attention or switch to a different task until your injury subsides.

Working with sheet metal on a daily basis puts a lot of strain on your body.

Follow all workplace safety precautions to remain injury-free.



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