

Ergonomic Tips for the North Pole

This holiday season we are checking in at the North Pole throughout December with some workplace safety and health advice for Santa and the elves to ensure they stay safe. In preparation for the big day, we are providing some tips to keep Santa and the elves safe while making, lifting, loading, and delivering all those presents! With proper ergonomic techniques, they will be in tiptop shape all season long.

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders are injuries resulting from work tasks such as:

- Lifting or pushing heavy or irregularly shaped objects (**hoisting that bag of toys or moving those heavy boxes through the workshop will take its toll over time**).
- Maintaining an awkward posture such as prolonged or repetitive reaching above shoulder height, kneeling, squatting, leaning over a counter or twisting the torso while lifting (**the elves work non-stop loading the sleigh with presents**).
- Performing the same or similar tasks repetitively (**the elves make toy assembly line work look like fun, but those repetitive tasks can cause injuries if ergonomic precautions are not taken**).
- Whole body or hand-arm vibration (**that new rocking horse takes a lot of sanding**).



Santa and the elves will want to make sure that the toy makers' workbenches are at the proper height and that anti-fatigue mats are used when prolonged standing is required. Equipment to prevent awkward postures, like eyeglasses with magnification, can reduce bending at the neck. Tools should have ergonomic handles and, if powered tools are required, Santa should try to buy noise reducers to protect the elves' hearing.

Like Santa, we at EHS hope everyone is on the nice list, but if you find yourself on the naughty list, you know what that means – coal! Ergonomic tools are available to help Santa conduct ergonomics audits of his mine. It includes ergonomics audits for three types of mining operations; slip, trip, and fall hazard checklists; musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) risk factor evaluation forms; and a tool to document and track remedial actions to address identified deficiencies.

Transporting the toys, loading the sleigh, and delivering all those presents can cause back injury or other musculoskeletal disorders.

With a little help from an ergonomics program, Santa and the elves can stay safe and healthy all year round so as you!

