

Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention Plan 2024-2026



What is a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD)?

A MSD is an injury to, or disease of, the body's musculoskeletal system and includes sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments, tendons and joints. MSDs can occur suddenly or progressively over time. They can be caused by physical and psychosocial hazards, which may also interact with one another to cause harm.

MSDs can significantly impact a worker's health and quality of life, whilst also affecting the productivity and operational costs of the business.

The majority of serious MSD claims are caused by:



Body stressing
such as lifting,
carrying and
repetitive movement²



Falls
on the same
level²

Work shouldn't hurt, but in NSW, MSDs are the most common injuries and diseases



52%

of all serious claims are for MSDs¹



\$64,759

is the average cost of one serious MSD claim¹



20 weeks

on average is lost time from work per person¹

Action areas

SafeWork NSW is dedicated to working with key stakeholders to prevent MSDs in workplaces, in line with the Australian Work Health and Safety (WHS) Strategy 2023-2033.



Raise workplace awareness and understanding of work-related MSDs and how they occur



Build workplace capability to eliminate and reduce risks to prevent MSDs



Drive compliance and continuous improvement through regulatory action



Prevent MSDs by addressing psychosocial risk factors

Research demonstrates a direct link between psychosocial hazards and increased risk of MSDs in the workplace.³

Meeting your legal obligations

Commitment

Demonstrate leadership commitment to prevent MSDs and adopt a risk management approach to address both physical and psychosocial hazards.

Consultation

Actively involve workers and others throughout the risk management process to prevent MSDs.

Capability

Build workplace capability to prevent MSDs and ensure compliance.

1. State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) Workers' Compensation Insurance Data all serious MSD claims averaged over five years (2018-19 – 2022-23). Serious MSD claims are those requiring 1 or more weeks off work.
2. State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) serious MSD claims 2018/19 – 2022/23.
3. Centre for Work Health Safety The link between workplace stressors and physical injury: Current evidence, prevalence in NSW employees and prevention tools, September 2021; and Dr Jodie Oakman, Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders in Australia, 2019.

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Action areas



Outcomes



What SafeWork NSW will deliver

Raise workplace awareness and understanding of work-related MSDs and how they occur

Workplaces have increased awareness and understanding of the risks associated with MSDs, including psychosocial hazards.

- Deliver tailored information to improve awareness and understanding of the nature of MSD risks across industries.
- Update guidance material to raise awareness of physical and psychosocial hazards that may lead to MSDs.
- Address persistent and emerging factors leading to MSDs.

Build workplace capability to eliminate and reduce risks to prevent MSDs

Workplaces have increased knowledge of WHS responsibilities to meet legislative obligations.

Workplaces have the capability to manage MSD-related hazards through good work design.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to develop evidence-based resources and initiatives to prevent MSDs.
- Share industry-based stories, tools and resources to support workplaces to better manage MSD risks.
- Promote good work design principles to enhance business productivity and improve worker health and safety.
- Provide advice and support to NSW workplaces to assist with meeting legislative requirements in managing MSD risks.

Drive compliance and continuous improvement through regulatory action

Workplaces are taking effective actions to eliminate and minimise MSD-related hazards.

- Undertake regulatory action against workplaces and leaders for failure to meet their WHS obligations.
- Continuously review SafeWork NSW's regulatory framework to ensure it is responsive and effective.
- MSD-related targeted compliance visits focusing on priority industries, occupations and/or workers.