Labor Management Safety Committee (LMSC) - June 29, 2010 Safety Message

Stretching During Your Work Day

To work efficiently, the human body needs to change positions and move throughout the day. Your concentration will increase and your fatigue – both mental and physical – will decrease if you spread out one long task or project into reasonable work periods and take time to stretch and move when possible.

Taking regular stretching breaks throughout the day will help you improve you focus and will allow your muscles to relax. Stretching takes just minutes and can be the difference in not hurting yourself. When you stretch your muscles 'warm up' and are more flexible. Therefore, stretch breaks can reduce possible injury to your muscles.

Your goal should be to do frequent but mild stretches throughout the day within a pain-free range. In other words, you shouldn't stretch to a point where it 'hurts'. Frequent stretching will reduce your muscle fatigue that comes from doing repetitive tasks and holding the sometimes awkward, but necessary, positions required to complete your work tasks.

Guidelines for Stretching Activities

- Start out easy if you've never stretched before, don't rush in! You may feel some discomfort when doing stretches you have not done before, especially if your muscles are stiff or weak. But stretching should never cause you pain. If you start to feel pain STOP!
- Stretch regularly throughout your work day.
- Hold each stretch for 10 to 20 seconds.
- Don't bounce.

You can try these types of stretching exercises, or any other ones you have learned or know.



Other types of stretches include:

Lower Back: place your hands on your hips, and bend back gently.

Shoulders: stretch your arms out and down – behind your back. You should feel the stretch in your chest and upper back. Gently roll your shoulders forward and then reverse directions.

Head / Shoulders: Lean your head gently to one shoulder, and then the other shoulder – slowly. Slowly roll your head all the way around in one direction and then the other. The key is going slowly.

By stretching prior to starting your workday and during your workday, you will hopefully stay more flexible and be healthier! Remember – Safety is NO Accident!