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Keeping the Presses Running With The Hartford



As a member of the printing community, you'll be receiving this periodic newsletter with tips about how to keep your business running smoothly and profitably. Here you'll find information such as how to make your building safe for your employees, prevent accidents or decrease your liability for certain business problems. We hope you find the information valuable and that it helps you in your risk management and loss control efforts. And if you are not currently a Hartford insured, we invite you to look closely at our Printers Program — designed specifically to meet the insurance needs of printing businesses. Please visit our Web site at www.thehartford.com/printers — or contact your local Hartford representative.

A Message from Bill West, Printers' Program Manager

Applying Ergonomics to Design a Safer Workplace

This issue of "Keeping the Presses Running" focuses on ergonomics, an important subject that, when properly applied, can make a real difference in the efficiency, productivity and safety of your workplace. Ergonomics has been much in the news lately, with vigorous debate in Congress about the OSHA ergonomics standards and their subsequent repeal. The Hartford opposed those standards, feeling that they imposed vague or improper requirements on employers and would make compliance burdensome.

While the standard has been defeated, there is still good reason to pay attention to ergonomics and how it affects your business. Essentially, ergonomics strives for ease-of-use in a designed product. There is no question that many employees are uncomfortable in the workplace. Some suffer disabling pain and numbness characteristic of ergonomic-related injuries caused by poorly designed workstations and processes. Applying ergonomics to address these situations is a good business management practice.

For many years, The Hartford has been working with its printing industry customers to identify workplace hazards and acquire

an in-depth understanding of the unique exposures facing this industry. Our Loss Control department offers the expertise, training, educational materials and knowledge of reporting requirements to help you implement and maintain sound ergonomics principles and processes in your workplace.

I encourage you to visit our Web site, www.thehartford.com/printers. You'll find considerable information related to the printing industry, such as our Loss Control Tips in our "Saving You Money" section. If you're not a Hartford insured, we invite you to look closely at our Printers' Program — designed specifically to meet your insurance needs. Our "Find a Hartford Agent" locator can help you contact your local Hartford representative.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Keeping the Presses Running. I'm sure the information will help you reduce your risk of loss and improve safety in your printing operation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill West". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill West

Keeping Ergonomics in Your Business

Ergonomics is one of the most powerful tools available to help business owners maintain a competitive edge, retain the best people and produce a quality product. But with Congress's recent decision to withdraw OSHA's ergonomics standard, many businesses may no longer feel the need to implement ergonomic changes. And this move could hamper their performance.

Although businesses don't *have* to comply with a standard, there is every reason to apply ergonomic principles to your business. Ergonomics is more than just installing lift tables and hoists or helping workers perform more comfortably. Ergonomics is a way of doing business. The more sophisticated and integrated your ergonomics process is, the better your results.

Many believe ergonomic expenses are simply overhead. But, in reality, whether you are paying for lights and heat, new equipment or insurance or injury costs, the money comes from one place — the product or service you produce. What goes out the door pays for everything that comes in. If the product you ship out doesn't cover your costs, your doors close. Applied ergonomics helps to minimize the cost of what you produce, thereby improving your business results.

Enlarging Your Ergonomics Program

Ergonomics is the practice of adapting the work place to the worker. Chances are you are already adopting ergonomic principles in your operations. If you've installed adjustable chairs for your office staff or installed lifts to reduce effort in the print shop, you're making ergonomic improvements. To reap all the possible benefits from an ergonomics program, printers need to enlarge their existing programs to address problems throughout their operations.

Ergonomics can help you meet the three things customers want — quality, affordable price and timely delivery. Most businesses miss one or more of the expectations — usually because of quality problems or late deliveries. Some real-life examples of such occurrences you may have experienced in your business, include:

- A roll of paper fell off a trolley and rolled into the press, causing a shutdown and a delayed edition.
- A poorly designed form caused the wrong paper to be shipped to a plant.
- An unnecessary, expensive process caused one company to lose a bid on a new contract.

These costly problems can be reduced or eliminated if an ergonomics expert works with the company to

redesign processes and equipment. There are several steps you can take to effectively enlarge your ergonomics program and reduce your risk.

Find the Value in Your Activities

Value-adding tasks are those that change the product to make it more valuable for the customer, such as printing. All other tasks — stacking, moving, storage — are not value-adding. Non-value-adding activities are a major expense and a major source of injuries — about 90 to 95% of injuries result from non-value-adding work.

Most U.S. manufacturing operations have a value-adding/non-value-adding ratio of 5% to 95%. Printers are generally better with a 30% to 70% ratio, which means about 70% of the production cost is non-value added. Identifying and eliminating non-value-adding tasks can reduce production costs and eliminate many exposures to injury. An effective ergonomics process keeps non-value-adding tasks out of new designs and eliminates existing non-value-adding tasks rather than purchase equipment to "fix" them.

Value-adding analysis

The "value-adding analysis" is one of the most important steps in the ergonomics process.

The purposes of the analysis are:

- To identify the ratio of value-adding to non-value-adding work.
- To determine what percentage of the non-value-adding work can be eliminated through design and process changes.

If we find that 20% of the steps in the process are unnecessary, there is considerable opportunity to improve the bottom line, as well as the injury log, by eliminating those steps. One company, for example, saved several million dollars when the ergonomics team identified a process change that ultimately eliminated a costly step in their production.

Successful Ergonomics — The Process

- *Management leadership and active support.* Without management support, any program will fail. For maximum benefit, ergonomics should become a part of all processes, including:
 - Equipment and material purchases
 - Process design

- Facility design and workstation layouts

The sample Ergonomics Policy Statement at the end of this article outlines how ergonomics should be incorporated throughout the company.

- *Routine employee involvement in the every day operations.* People who perform a task know that task better than anyone else does. Obtaining and implementing their ideas, where practical, is good business. Many employers fail to utilize this invaluable resource.
- *Job hazard analysis and control.* A job hazard analysis starts with the value-adding assessment discussed earlier. The job hazard analysis is only necessary for those tasks that are value-adding and necessary. Look for and redesign the job to eliminate the following hazards:
 - Awkward postures (particularly static awkward postures)
 - High forces
 - High frequency of similar motions (If accompanied by high forces or awkward postures.)
 - Adverse environmental conditions such as heat or cold, vibration, loud noise, excessive or too little light, etc.

These ergonomic risk factors are responsible for most ergonomic-related discomfort and injuries. In many cases they can be designed out of the workstation without significant cost. More importantly, implementing an ergonomics process will ensure these factors are recognized during the design phases of a project, where they can be eliminated.

- *Medical management* of ergonomic-related injuries. This is one of the more complex areas in ergonomics. Finding a trusted medical caregiver is a primary concern, and then an effective return-to-work program is needed to help to reduce costs. Check with The Hartford to learn more about medical management and return-to-work programs available in your state.
- *Effective training at all levels of the operation.* Your engineers and layout people need to understand ergonomics if you expect them to apply the concepts. Each individual should be trained on his or her role the ergonomics process.
- *Regular program evaluation.* Evaluation of the process is vital. With a formal, routine evaluation process, ergonomic initiatives can be kept on track.

Implementing these steps to enlarge your ergonomic process will achieve rewarding dividends.

John Kelling, CPE, ARM
Executive Technical Consultant
The Hartford Loss Control

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SAMPLE ERGONOMICS POLICY STATEMENT

Our customers demand a quality product at a fair price in a timely manner. We strive to meet those demands at all times. To meet customer demands, people must be comfortable, and exposed to a minimum of hazards. Injuries and illnesses not only cause discomfort to injured individuals, they also interfere with our ability maintain our competitive edge.

Many tasks, from using a computer to picking up heavy loads, can cause discomfort that is frequently avoidable by redesign of the task, the process or the equipment.

Our ergonomics program has two foundations:

- To help reduce exposure to injury and illness, and to improve our service, we must design our processes to eliminate unnecessary tasks. In addition, we must find and eliminate the source of these unnecessary tasks.
- For tasks that are necessary, yet cause discomfort, injury and illness, we need to redesign them to better fit the individuals performing the tasks.

Resources are limited, so we need to prioritize our ergonomics efforts, focusing on areas that present the greatest exposure to our people and to our customer service. We need all of our people involved in this process.

Six elements make up our ergonomics process:

1. Management Leadership
2. Employee Participation
3. Hazard Analysis
4. Job Hazard Analysis and Control
5. Training
6. Routine Program Evaluation

(Production manager or appropriate senior manager leads the implementation and monitoring of this program. He/she will be assisted by the ergonomics team.)

General Manager

This document is provided for information purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for individual legal counsel or advice on issues discussed within. Readers seeking resolution of specific legal issues or business concerns related to the captioned topics should consult their attorney and/or insurance representative.

Middle Market at The Hartford