February 2024

IN TOUCH

EHS Newsletter

SAFETECH
Environment
Health
Safety

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS of making the world a better place

www.safetech.co.za

CONTACT US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

- EHS Risk Assessments
- Occupational Hygiene Surveys
- Ergonomics Surveys
- EHS Management System Development and Implementation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Identification of EHS Legal Requirements and Compliance Audits
- Construction EHS Services
- Construction H&S Files
- Internal Auditor Training
- General EHS Training

Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)

OH0049

OHAIA association OHAIA-A 005 (2023)

Office Syndrome

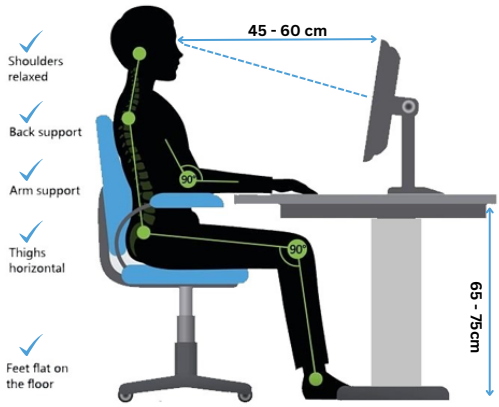
Office Syndrome is typically found in office workers who spend many hours in front of a computer screen. The pain can be attributed to poor posture, prolonged sitting and sitting in an inappropriate position. Over time, the muscles become contracted and result in muscle tightness and pain.

SYMPTOMS

headaches · sleeplessness · back & hip stiffness · dry eyes · wrist & finger pain · shoulder, neck & back pain · numbness of the fingers, hands or arms · abdomical pain / discomfort

Workstation Set Up:

- Computer mouse and keyboard should be directly in front of you at a comfortable distance.
- Arms must be properly supported.
- Screen should be an arm's length away from you and level with or slightly below your line of vision.



TOP TIPS

Take short breaks to rest the eyes. This is also a good time to stretch or take a walking break.

Improve posture by sitting up straight with your shoulders rolled back, your chin tucked to elongate your spine, and your thighs parallel to the floor. Knee flexion should not exceed 90 degrees. Foot support can be used if the feet do not reach the floor.

Adjust your sitting position regularly (every 1-2 hours) in order to prevent muscle fatigue and subsequent slouching. You can also change the angle of your seat and avoid sitting at the edge of the seat.

Adequate lighting can reduce eye fatigue and headaches, increase alertness and also help to raise productivity.

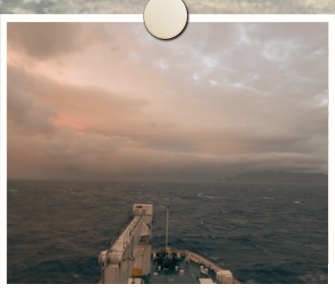
CONTACT US TO ASSIST WITH AN ERGONOMICS RISK ASSESSMENT AT YOUR SITE.

SAFETECH ON THE MOVE

Safetech was out and about in the Southern Ocean – 2500km from Cape Town, on Marion Island. Jason Hutten, from the Safetech Cape Town office, assisted with the environmental monitoring portion of an engineering project at the South African Research Station on the island.

The team sailed on the S.A. Agulhas II. A few pictures from this pristine environment are shown below, including a view from the bird observation deck, while sailing south. Safetech is privileged to support the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to preserve the biodiversity in this vitally important ecosystem.

THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH, MISTER!



A BIRD'S EYE VIEW EN-ROUTE TO MARION ISLAND

RUSH HOUR ON MARION ISLAND

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Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)

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OH0049

OHAIA association
OHAIA-A 005 (2023)

World Cancer Day was born on the 4 February 2000 at the World Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium in Paris. The Paris Charter aims to promote research, prevent cancer, improve patient services, raise awareness and mobilise the global community to make progress against cancer, and includes the adoption of World Cancer Day.

World Cancer Day
4 February

Occupational cancer is the term given to cancers that result entirely or partly from exposure to a carcinogen (cancer causing) or situation at work. Generally speaking, this exposure occurs over a long period of time (more than 10 years).

Research shows that the amount of cancer related to occupational exposure varies with the type of cancer. Common types of occupational cancer are lung cancer, bladder cancer and mesothelioma (cancer that forms in the thin tissue that lines many internal organs).

HOW DO WE KNOW IF AN AGENT OR SITUATION MAY CAUSE CANCER?

Scientists have identified carcinogens using information from:

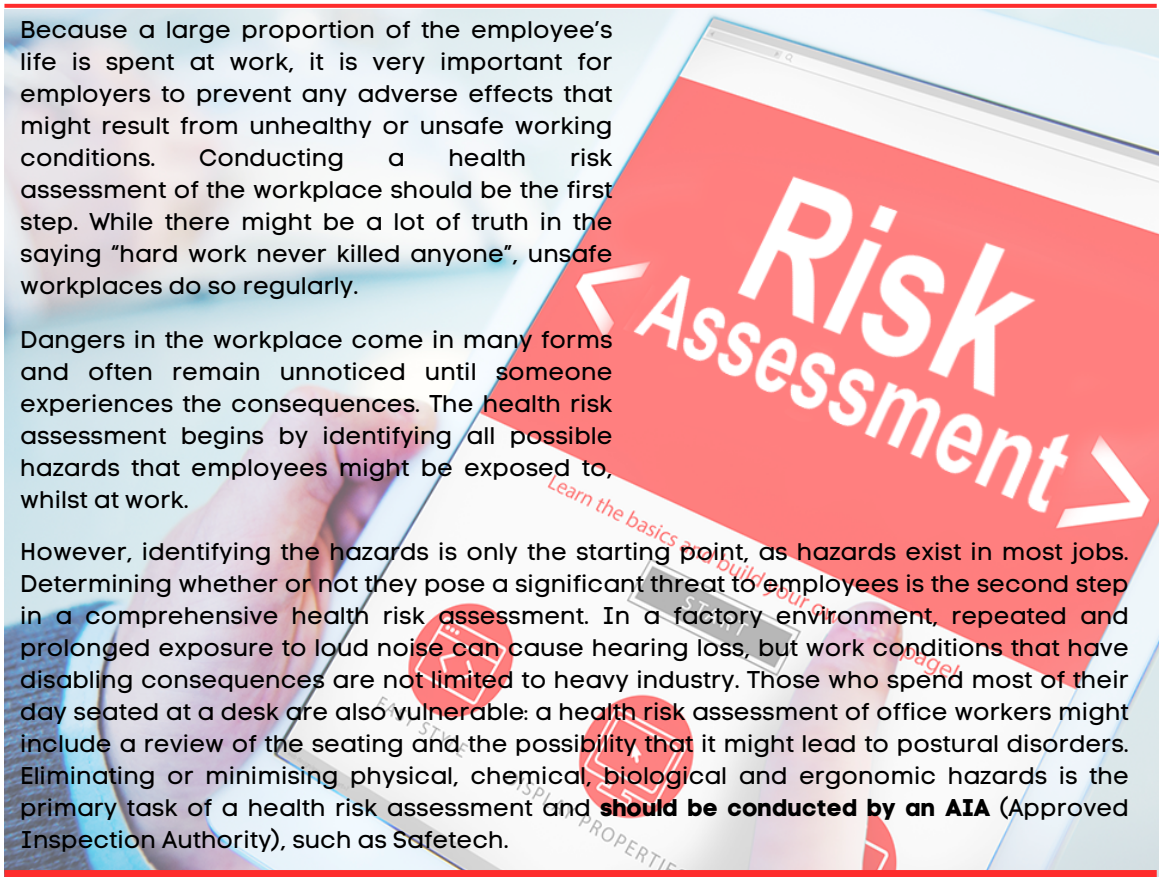
- studies that look at the relationship between an exposure and the risk of developing cancer in human populations.
- experiments that examine the relationship between exposure and the risk of developing cancer in laboratory animals.
- tests that examine the ability of an agent to cause mutations (genetic changes) in cells.
- knowledge of chemical structures and the way in which chemicals interact with the body.

Not all exposure to carcinogens result in occupational cancer. There are many factors that increase the risk, such as 1) route of exposure, 2) concentration of the carcinogen, 3) dose (toxicity), 4) frequency of exposure, 5) duration of exposure, 6) exposure to other agents at the same time (smoking, medical treatments, etc.), 7) individual characteristics (age, genetics etc.). In general, the higher the exposure, the higher the risk of developing a health effect such as cancer.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO WORK SAFELY WITH A CARCINOGEN?.

Yes! There are many ways to control the hazards and risks of working with a possible carcinogen.

- A hazard control program consists of all steps necessary to protect workers from exposure and the procedures required to monitor worker exposure and their health.
- Knowing which control method is best can be a challenging process. It often involves doing a risk assessment to evaluate and prioritise the hazards and risks.



Because a large proportion of the employee's life is spent at work, it is very important for employers to prevent any adverse effects that might result from unhealthy or unsafe working conditions. Conducting a health risk assessment of the workplace should be the first step. While there might be a lot of truth in the saying "hard work never killed anyone", unsafe workplaces do so regularly.

Dangers in the workplace come in many forms and often remain unnoticed until someone experiences the consequences. The health risk assessment begins by identifying all possible hazards that employees might be exposed to, whilst at work.

However, identifying the hazards is only the starting point, as hazards exist in most jobs. Determining whether or not they pose a significant threat to employees is the second step in a comprehensive health risk assessment. In a factory environment, repeated and prolonged exposure to loud noise can cause hearing loss, but work conditions that have disabling consequences are not limited to heavy industry. Those who spend most of their day seated at a desk are also vulnerable: a health risk assessment of office workers might include a review of the seating and the possibility that it might lead to postural disorders. Eliminating or minimising physical, chemical, biological and ergonomic hazards is the primary task of a health risk assessment and **should be conducted by an AIA** (Approved Inspection Authority), such as Safetech.