

"To protect the human resources and financial assets of our member districts in order to support the future of public education"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ergo Assessment
Quick Reference Guide
Make Safety Personal
eBacksafe®
Holiday Food Prep Safety
Office Stretching

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When to schedule a "Preventative" Ergo Assessment with MERMA

Preventative Ergonomic Assessments can have many benefits to both the employee and the employer. Preventative ergonomic assessments help employees avoid injury and can prevent a workers compensation claim. These assessments are free to members, are proactive in nature, and can be scheduled the same week in most cases. Here are a few circumstances in which you can schedule an ergonomic assessment:

- When an employee is having or feeling discomfort in their neck, back, shoulders, wrists, and legs when at their workstation
- When new employees are hired, an assessment can help set them up for success
- When an employee changes departments and workstations
- When an employee requests an accommodation that involves their workstation
- When an employee asks for new equipment, such as a new chair or a sit/stand workstation

It should be noted that ergonomic assessments requested by a doctor for an existing workers compensation claim must be completed by a third-party contractor.

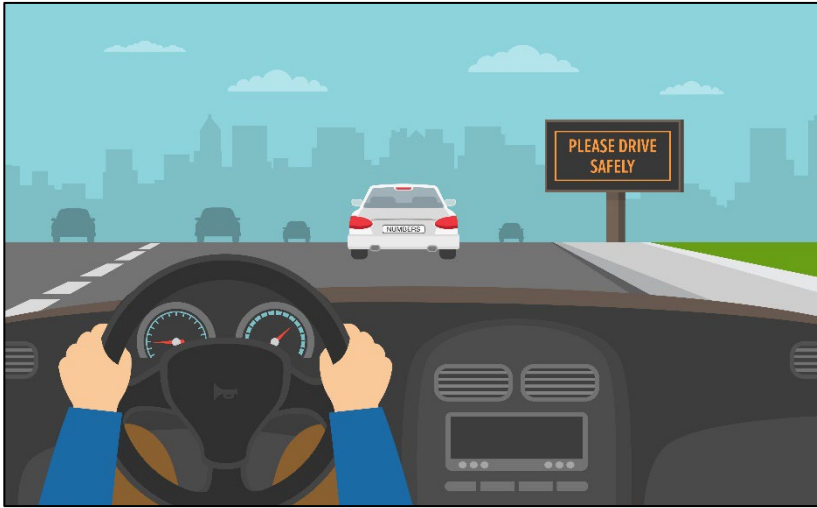
HELPFUL LINKS

www.merma.org

www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/

[Schedule an Ergo Evaluation](#)

How a Driver Safety Policy can help protect your district



If you have employees who drive on your district's behalf, you may want to consider a Driver Safety Policy if you don't already have one. Driver Safety Policies can help improve safety, protect your district from liability, and provide accountability to employees who drive. Here are some of the ways a Driver Safety Policy can help protect your district:

- Helps determine exactly who is driving on the district's behalf
- Establishes safe driving standards for new hires and existing employees
- Allows the district to set up safety rules that must be followed when driving on behalf of the district
- Provides safe driver training guidelines
- Allows districts to monitor the driving records and status of driver's licenses through the DMV Employer Pull Notice Program
- Prevents employees with suspended, restricted, or revoked licenses from driving on behalf of the district

While creating and implementing a Driver Safety Policy can take time and effort, it can also protect your district and potentially save lives.

Make Safety Personal

Are you making safety personal? As a supervisor or a leader in your district, is the safety of your employees your number one priority? Here are some questions you may ask yourself, along with some advice on how to "make safety personal."

When an employee is injured, do you make them your number one priority? If not, why not? What is more important than the safety of your employees? Often injuries can be frustrating, and supervisors become numb or bias to new injuries. By making all injuries your number one priority, you can demonstrate to all your employees that you care about them, and you value them. The next time you have an injury in your workgroup, drop everything you are doing and attend to that employee. Physically go to the place where they were injured. Show them that *their* safety is *your* number one priority. Ensure they receive medical treatment if appropriate.

When an employee is injured, do you feel responsible? This is not about being responsible for "causing" the injury but feeling responsible for creating and fostering an environment to protect your employees. If you are a supervisor or leader, and are having multiple injuries in your workgroup, try to find out why. Ask your employees how the injury could have been prevented. Ask them if there is any additional training that you can provide, and then provide it.

Do you consider injuries acceptable? If not, tell that to your employees. Tell them that when an employee is injured, you view it as a failure on your part. You take responsibility. Their safety is personal to you. Tell them you want to be informed immediately about any unsafe conditions, so you have an opportunity to fix it before an injury occurs.

eBacksafe® for Teachers and Paraeducators



We are excited to offer eBacksafe® virtual injury prevention program designed specifically for teachers and paraeducators. **Segments of the virtual safety training were customized and filmed locally to ensure that real-life wellness scenarios were addressed.**

FIT has been in business for 30 years helping school districts and other organizations throughout the US protect the health and wellbeing of employees. It was discovered that fatigue, discomfort, pain, and injuries are often caused by something called Cumulative Micro Trauma and that when employees learned how to prevent it, their quality of life at work and at home improved dramatically.

If you are looking for strategies to improve culture, moral, staffing, and safety, this is a great program that is free to our member districts.

Contact David Bolton for details about enrolling your teachers and paraeducators in this virtual training program.

Holiday Food Preparation Safety Tips

Enjoying food with family and friends is one of the highlights of the holiday season and while everyone wants to join in to help, too many cooks in the kitchen can result in an increased risk of food poisoning. Foodborne illness can cause severe and even life-threatening illnesses. Easy-to-do, safe food handling practices help protect everyone in the family from getting sick.

Follow these simple steps to properly handle food and reduce the risk of food poisoning:

- **Defrost carefully.** Never allow foods to defrost at room temperature, on the counter or in warm water. Defrost food only in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in a cool water bath (inside a leak-proof plastic bag) with water that is changed every 30 minutes. When defrosting food in the refrigerator, remember to cover raw meat and place it on the bottom shelf so juices won't drip onto other foods. When defrosting food in the microwave, cook it immediately afterward.
- **Wash hands before, during and after food preparation.** Proper hand-washing may eliminate a large percentage of food poisoning cases. Remember to wash hands when switching tasks, such as handling raw meat and then cutting vegetables. Wash hands with soap in clean, running water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Keep kitchen surfaces clean.** Use hot, soapy water to wash countertops and surfaces, cutting boards, refrigerator door handles and utensils. After cleaning, keep it clean by avoiding cross-contamination.
- **Use two cutting boards.** Dedicate one for raw meat, poultry and fish and the other for ready-to-eat foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Make it easy to remember by using color-coded cutting boards, one for raw meats and one for ready-to-eat foods.
- **Employ different utensils for different tasks.** Use separate spoons and forks to taste, stir and serve food.
- **Resist temptation.** When baking, avoid eating foods containing raw eggs or uncooked flour, such as cookie dough or cake batter. These ingredients may contain bacteria that can lead to food poisoning if not cooked first.

- **Buy and use a food thermometer.** It is the only reliable way to determine the doneness of your food and ensure that food is cooked to proper internal temperatures. (Do not rely on "clear juices" to tell that the turkey is done.)
- **Refrigerate food within two hours of serving.** This helps to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria that can lead to food poisoning. This is especially important when serving buffets. Use a refrigerator thermometer and make sure it's set at below 40°F.



Office Stretches & Exercises

Throughout the day, or when you begin to feel restless at your desk, office stretches can help improve circulation, stretch muscles, and improve posture. Here are a few stretches and exercises you can do at work that don't require anything other than your chair.

