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EU Campaign Targets Safety and Health at Work

Focus on Musculoskeletal Disorders

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The European 'Lighten the Load' campaign has been initiated to promote an integrated management approach to tackle musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) embracing prevention of MSDs, and the retention, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers who already suffer from MSDs. Run by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the campaign culminates in the European Week of Safety and Health at Work from 22 – 26 October 2007.

Background of the Campaign

The overall aim of the European campaign on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) is to support employers, workers, safety representatives, practitioners, preventative services, policy makers and other stakeholders in improving MSD prevention at workplace level by taking forward European action on MSDs initiated by the first European Week for Safety and Health at Work in 2000 and involving all Member States and EFTA countries in campaign activities. The integrated management approach includes three key elements:

- Employers, employees and government working together to tackle MSDs;
- Addressing the whole load on the body leading to MSDs; and,
- Managing the retention, rehabilitation and return to work of those who suffer, or have suffered, MSDs.

A special focus should be placed on multidisciplinary approaches where the prevention side is working with the rehabilitation side. Particularly important is the role of social and organisational support in enabling workers both to return to work and subsequently to sustain employment when experiencing MSDs.

Get Involved!

The European campaign on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) is an opportunity to make workplaces safer and healthier. Everyone is invited to join in, however big or small their participation may be.

Ideas about how you can get involved in the campaign include:

- Risk assessments;
- DSE assessments;
- Lifting and manual handling training;
- Training events, seminars and workshops;
- Poster competitions and quizzes;
- Film, video and multimedia; and,
- Advertising and promotion campaigns.

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