Safety & Care

Sprains and Strains

Sprain and strain injuries are the leading cause of time loss injuries for workers across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

What causes sprain, strain, and tear injuries?

- Force – lifting, pushing, pulling, or carrying.
- Posture – working in static posture (the same position for a long time with little or no movement) or awkward postures such as bending over or twisting.
- Repetition – performing the same movement over and over without breaks or time to recover.
- Vibration – hand or arm vibration from holding a tool or equipment that vibrates continuously, or whole-body vibration from sitting or standing on equipment that vibrates.

What are the symptoms of sprains and strains?

Some signs include: aching, burning, or shooting pain; tingling; weakness; inability to move; swelling or tenderness; numbness; and fatigue.

Don't ignore symptoms: recognize and report them as soon as possible. Early signs and symptoms can progress into conditions which can have long-term effects.

Talk to your supervisor and follow your safety program, which should include working together to identify hazards (i.e. the cause of the problem), and seek ways to reduce or eliminate the hazard.

What are Employers required to do?

- Identify job-related hazards;
- Train workers about their job's hazards;
- Work together to eliminate risk factors;
- Follow up to make sure controls are working; and
- Ensure workers report early symptoms or concerns.

For more information, visit our website to review the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* – Sections 82, 83, 84, 85, and the *Hazard Assessment* Code of Practice.