

### 5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

## Risk Management: Ergonomics Is Part of the Safety Equation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Shift: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES:

**FOCUS:** Carpal tunnel and tendonitis are becoming frequent injuries in the fire service due to computer usage as part of our daily tasks.

### CHALLENGE

Computers are a part of our daily life. We prepare and process reports and conduct research as part of our daily duties as firefighters. In addition, we also use computers as part of our recreation when we engage in computer games. It is estimated we spend four to six hours per day on the computer. Our computer activities are performed on laptops as well as “community” workstations which present different challenges. How can we reduce potential injuries?

### DISCUSSION

Have you ever had a backache, headache or experienced wrist or shoulder pain at the end of the day? Most of us experience some form of aches and pains on a daily basis and simply ignore it! Pain can be a symptom of ergonomic issues that should be addressed in the way we perform our routine tasks.

1. You should ask yourself some simple questions when engaging in tasks:
2. Is this a repetitive task such as using the mouse or typing on the keyboard?
3. If I experienced pain after computer work, what was I doing?
4. Is my body in an awkward position such as twisting or reaching when working at the computer?

### A few comfort tips!

- Remember to breathe deeply. Deep breathing energizes and relaxes you as oxygen flows.
- Blink your eyes frequently to reduce dryness.
- The top of your eyebrows should be level with the top of the screen.
- Adjust the chair to suit your body for proper height and lumbar support.
- Reduce the need to reach for items, move telephone, files, etc. closer.
- Shake your hands periodically when keying for extended periods of time.
- It is important we make every attempt to keep our bodies in a neutral position and take frequent mini-breaks when performing repetitive tasks. Ergonomics is about being comfortable!

**The greatest asset of the fire service is our people, protect them.**