

Ergonomics in Construction: Management and Worker Perceptions

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Construction is by its very nature a physical process. This is further aggravated by its labour intensive nature and the low level of mechanisation.

Construction requires, inter alia, bending, working in awkward or cramped positions, reaching away from the body and overhead, repetitive movements, handling heavy materials and equipment, use of body force, exposure to vibration and noise, and climbing and descending.

Poor ergonomics results not only in injury or disease to persons, but compromises cost, productivity, quality, schedule, and worker satisfaction.

Descriptive research conducted to determine the status quo with respect to occupational health in construction investigated, inter alia, ergonomic related issues. Findings include the following: musculoskeletal injuries predominate among health problems, two-thirds of the top five health problems from each of 3 survey populations being ergonomic related; climbing and descending was ranked within the top 3 ergonomic problems for each survey population, and back ailments was ranked second by managers in terms of perceived incidence of ailments suffered by workers.

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