



Approved for Release
William J. Fleming
Director for Human Resources Management and
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Dec 18, 2012

Date

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) BULLETIN 165, FY13

SUBJECT: Ergonomics Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon release of this HR Bulletin

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled or superseded

SUPERSEDES: None

BACKGROUND: Executive Order 13507, dated April 8, 2009, created a Federal health reform office that included a Federal civilian employee wellness initiative. The President tasked the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) with surveying the status of wellness programs available to civilian employees. As a result of the Executive order, the Office of Management and Budget required all Federal agencies to have employee wellness initiatives included in their annual budget requests.

Additionally, in its memo of July 15, 2010, OPM directed executive-level Departments to develop a five-year wellness plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2012–17 with the goal that by FY 2017, 75 percent of Department of Commerce (Department) employees would participate in the Department's wellness programs.

The Department established its wellness policy in HR Bulletin #155, which described the five program elements required by OPM to be included in a wellness program. Element 2 is Supportive Social and Physical Environments, which includes establishing a Department-wide ergonomics policy that creates guidelines for bureaus and organizational units to develop ergonomics programs.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this HR Bulletin is to establish Department policy for implementing an ergonomics program.

APPLICABILITY: This HR Bulletin applies to all Department bureaus, organizational units, and other components.

DEFINITIONS:

Ergonomics: Ergonomics is the science of designing the workplace (equipment, tools, facilities, processes, and environment) to fit the worker. It is a multidisciplinary field of study that integrates

industrial psychology, engineering, medicine, and design. The goal of an ergonomics program is to design the workplace to reduce the potential for employee injury, and to enhance comfort, reduce errors, and provide an overall cost benefit to the agency while increasing productivity.

Reasonable Accommodation: If an employee requests a change to the workstation/work area relating to a medical condition, the employee must direct the request to the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator of their specific bureau or their first-line supervisor in order to initiate the reasonable accommodations process.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Department to improve the comfort and well-being of employees by identifying and correcting ergonomic risk factors in the workplace. The Department bureaus, organizational units, and other components shall develop and implement an ergonomics program as part of their Safety, Health, and Wellness programs.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

1. The Office of Human Resources Management shall maintain the Department's Ergonomic Policy and serve as a resource to bureaus and organizational units as they develop and implement their ergonomics programs.
2. The heads of bureaus and organizational units shall support the development and implementation of ergonomics programs as part of their Safety, Health, and Wellness programs.
3. The bureau or organization Wellness Coordinator shall incorporate ergonomics into their Safety, Health, and Wellness programs in accordance with HR Bulletin #155, "Wellness Policy."
4. Managers and supervisors shall support their organization's ergonomics program by ensuring the proper setup of employee workstations/work areas. Managers and supervisors will work with their Safety Manager/Coordinator and/or Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator to address employee concerns/complaints about their workstation/work area setup in a timely manner.
5. Employees are encouraged to take an active role in ensuring the setup of their workstation/area is ergonomically sound and to report concerns.
6. Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators should follow guidance provided in DAO 215-10 and work closely with bureau and organization Safety Managers/Coordinators and supervisors when responding to reasonable accommodation requests.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES: Updated resources and guidance for developing and implementing ergonomics programs will be provided on the Department ergonomics page, http://hr.commerce.gov/Employees/WorkLifeIssues/PROD01_009674. Information on reasonable accommodation is provided at http://www.osec.doc.gov/opog/dmp/daos/dao215_10.html.

OFFICE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH: Nancy J. McWilliams, Director, NMWilliams@doc.gov, (202) 482-4935