Job-specific functional assessment associated with reduction in musculoskeletal injuries in building security workers

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1. Scope

Defensive tactics training is an annual requirement for security personnel working in a building security services team. Participants were suffering musculoskeletal injuries during the training sessions. An ergonomist was engaged to assist with the identification and implementation of workplace injury prevention strategies, including job-specific pre-employment assessments. Soon after implementation, injuries increased following an upgrade in training techniques that was not reflected in the initial job-specific functional assessment. The assessment tool was redesigned with positive results. Workers are required to achieve the assessment criteria prior to participating in annual training. Project costs to date are approx $85,000. Annual claims costs associated with training injuries have reduced from a peak of $187,000 to nil over the last two years.

2. Project organisation

Ergonomist conducted the initial task analysis and assessment design with input from operations personnel. Secondary review and update of assessment involved more collaboration with operations personnel for the assessment tool activities and grading criteria.

3. Human Factors topics covered

Assessment and evaluation; participatory ergonomics; musculoskeletal injury prevention

4. Project phases

- Initial task analysis and design of pre-employment assessment, including training activities (1 month)
- Conduct annual pre-training assessment (4 years)
- Re-evaluate program and training demands with subsequent update to assessment to reflect changes in training activities (1 month)
- Continue annual pre-training assessments (2 years)

5. Conclusion

Job-specific functional assessments can be a useful tool for injury prevention however they need to be updated as job requirements change to maintain effectiveness.