Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 6 – February 8 – February 12, 2021

Anti-Fatigue Matting

Introduction

Standing for long periods of time may be required based on the nature of your work but it would have long term detrimental effects to your body if proper steps are not taken to reduce the impact. Anti-fatigue matting is a popular choice to reduce the effects of long periods of standing on the body but unless implemented properly, can lead to other hazards or serve no real benefit. This week we are going to look at the health risks of standing for long periods, when, where and what types of anti-fatigue mats should be used and other measures that can be implemented in the workplace to lessen the risks.

Monday – The Health Risks of Prolonged Standing

Prolonged standing on a regular basic without the ability to frequently change body positions can lead to short and long term health problems such as sore feet, swelling of the legs, varicose veins, lower back pain and general soreness and can lead to more serious long term effects. This week we are going to discuss ways to reduce these health risks in your workplace.

Tuesday – Why Use an Anti-Fatigue Mat?

Having the correct anti-fatigue matting in areas where standing is required and a change in floor type is not practical is an effective measure to put in place in addition to other important measures that will be discussed later this week. Anti-fatigue mats reduce the shock to the body from repeatedly walking on a hard surface and cushions the feet to reduce foot fatigue. They can also provide extra grip on hard surface flooring that may become slick to reduce the risk of slips and falls.

Wednesday – What Type of Matting Should be Used?

Having the correct matting in place that is appropriate for the area is extremely vital. Having the incorrect matting in place could be more hazardous than having no matting at all. Today we will discuss factors to consider when choosing the correct matting for your area.

- Choose the appropriate thickness of the mat. Having a thicker more cushioned mat is not necessarily the best option. The appropriate thickness should have some elasticity of not allow the feet to sink in which will put the body in an unnatural and unsafe position.
- Choose the correct surface, if the matting will be in an area where it will be exposed to liquid, food or anything that might create a slip hazard, extra grip on the matting surface may be required.
- Maintain the mat. Having a frayed mat with raised edges or allowing the matting to become overly dirty or slick will greatly increase slip and trip hazards.

Thursday – What Other Measures Can Be Implemented?

In most cases, an anti-fatigue mat is not going to solve all the safety risks associated with prolong standing. Today we are going to discuss other measures that can be implemented in your workplace to improve employees' long-term physical health.

- Frequent changes in work positions. Work should be organized so employees have options for different working positions and have the option to change positions frequently to reduce the stress on the body of maintaining a static standing position.
- Choosing the correct type of footwear. Having the correct footwear with proper support can greatly reduce the effects of prolong standing. Footwear lacking support will only exacerbate the stress on the body.

- Type of flooring. Wood, cork, carpeting or rubber or any flooring that provides some elasticity, is generally gentler on workers feet. Softer flooring can also reduce slips or falls on harder slicker surfaces.

Friday – Open Discussion

This week we've discussed the health hazards associated with prolonged standing, why anti-fatigue matting may help reduce these risks, what type of matting is appropriate for your work area and what other measures can be implemented to aid in reducing the risks. Now let's open it up to the group for discussion.

- Does your work area require standing for long periods?
- If so is anti-fatigue matting in place where standing on hard surfaces is necessary?
- Is the matting appropriate for the area? Is it in good condition?
- For work areas that require long term standing, are other measures in place such as job rotation or frequent breaks in place to reduce the effects?