Success with Ergonomics

Tyson Foods of Monett

State: Missouri

Company: Tyson Foods of Monett
Monett, MO

Industry: Poultry slaughterhouse - SIC Code: 2015, NAICS Code: 311615

Employees: 850

Success Brief: In addition to the comprehensive ergonomics program to reduce injuries that was already in place, an aggressive on-site medical management program was implemented in March 2002 to further reduce the number and severity of injuries/illnesses that could arise despite the ergonomics program. That medical management program has resulted in a decreased number of recordable injuries/illnesses.

The Problem

Musculoskeletal disorder rates were disproportionately elevated. An effective program for properly placing workers in job assignments was not in place. As a result, Tyson Foods of Monett introduced on-site medical management as a complement to the existing ergonomics program.

The Solution

The company developed and introduced a comprehensive on-site medical management program with an on-site physical therapist available to assist with job placement, job analyses, as well as for follow-up on doctor-prescribed treatment of work-related injuries and/or illnesses. The occupational health nurses, physicians, and therapists meet together at least annually as a group to discuss the successes of the medical management program as well as to recognize areas of improvement and formulate a plan to ensure implementation of best practices. The occupational health nurses communicate on a regular basis with the physicians, clinics, and therapists to ensure the best treatment plan is being utilized to bring the injured worker to a quick and full recovery followed by proper job placement to reduce and/or avoid any further injury.

The Impact

Having a physical therapist onsite with intimate knowledge of the not only the work environment, but the
management team and team members resulted in a well-coordinated plan of treatment for musculoskeletal disorders and other injuries and illnesses. This, in turn, has produced enhanced job placement, improved and personalized modification of duties for injured employees, improved communications between the therapist, doctor, team member, and management team, as well as faster recovery times, and in some cases prevention of work-related injuries/illnesses.

**Source:** Teresa Bowman, RN, BSN, Complex Nurse Manager, Tyson Foods Monett Complex (November 19, 2002, updated July 25, 2006).