

Topic Outline for Ergonomics

For the wine industry there are two main sections of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that apply. 296-307 for Agriculture and 296-800 for General Industry. Most wineries fall under General Industry so that is the focus of this outline.

Definition: The science and practice of designing jobs or tasks within a workplace to match the capabilities and limitations of the human body.

Examples within a Winery: Multiple tasks on the bottling line, cellar, barrel room, and winery offices.

Regulatory Summary (with emphasis on application for wineries covered under general industry):

1. Improper ergonomics can result in musculoskeletal injuries. Musculoskeletal injuries are the highest number and most expensive claims recorded by Washington State Labor and Industries each year.
2. DOSH provides guidance on Ergonomics (see links below).
3. Wineries should have a written plan addressing Ergonomics and provide documented training. It can be section or chapter within your written Accident Prevention Program (APP).
4. Examples of ergonomics within a winery:
 - Emphasis and training on proper lifting; bringing work to the appropriate level to minimize bending, kneeling, stretching, overhead reaching and so on
 - Knowing your limitations! Suggest possible alternatives such as job rotation
 - Utilize help whenever possible. Could be a co-worker, or a tool such as a hand truck or cart to move heavy or awkward materials, barrel racks with rollers rolling barrels, etc.
 - Make suggestions - you know your work area best, and don't hesitate to ask for help from winery co-workers/owners/managers to prevent potential musculoskeletal injuries

Best Management Practices

General

- Workplace layout/design for efficiency
- Train employees on proper lifting techniques
- Use material handling equipment (dollies, handcarts, dumb waiters, hoists, etc.)
- Job rotation (avoid excessive bending, reaching, and twisting)
- Taking recommended breaks; particularly when standing or sitting for long periods of time
- Stretching prior to beginning work day; particularly in cellar and barrel operations
- Conduct evaluations of work stations or positions

Specific

- Have hot and cold water available on catwalks near tank top openings (so you don't have to carry buckets full of water up a ladder)
- Use rollers or other mechanical devices for turning barrels
- If you stack barrels and don't have a forklift in your winery, consider using a hoist
- Perform chemical additions from the bottom of the tank during pump-overs, racking or mixing rather than at the top of the tank
- Consider job rotation when performing repetitive motion tasks such as racking, cleaning, and filling barrels

5. Separate downloadable documents are provided at the following links and under the Winery Safety tab at www.winerywise.com:

- **Evaluation Tools** <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/Ergonomics/ServicesResources/Tools/default.asp>
- **About Ergonomics** <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/Ergonomics/default.asp>