

## **New California Workplace Standards for the Health and Safety of Hospitality Housekeepers**

Beginning July 1, 2018, hospitality employers in California will be required to comply with new regulations for policies and training practices for housekeepers. The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standard Board approved the “Hotel Housekeepers Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program” intended to control the risk of musculoskeletal injuries and disorders to housekeepers in resorts, hotels and other lodging establishments.

Hospitality employers must establish, implement and maintain an effective, written musculoskeletal injury prevention program (“MIPP”) that addresses hazards specific to housekeeping staff. Employers are required to design and implement the MIPP to include various elements and to provide training to housekeepers related to the risks of musculoskeletal injuries. These regulations go into effect July 1, so any employer that has not yet created an MIPP should do so immediately.

### **The MIPP**

The MIPP must be readily accessible for housekeepers during any shift at a worksite. It can be kept as a separate program or incorporated into the employer’s existing illness prevention program. The MIPP must include each of the following elements:

1. The names or job titles of the individuals responsible for implementing the MIPP at each worksite.
2. A system to ensure that supervisors and housekeepers comply with the MIPP, follow safe workplace housekeeping practices and use the equipment deemed appropriate for each task. This can be accomplished through recognition of employees who follow proper practices, training and retraining programs, and disciplinary action for those who do not comply.
3. Procedures for an evaluation of each worksite intended to identify and evaluate housekeeping hazards (more information provided below).
4. A system of communication with the employees on matters related to safety and health in the workplace, including encouraging housekeepers to inform the employer of hazards at the workplace and injuries or symptoms without fear of reprisal.
5. Procedures to investigate musculoskeletal injuries.
6. Methods or procedures for correcting hazards identified in the workplace evaluation or through investigation of injuries to housekeepers. These procedures must include methods for determining if corrective measures are implemented appropriately.
7. Procedures for annually (or more frequently) reviewing the MIPP to determine its effectiveness and make changes.

### **Training Requirements**

Once the MIPP is established, employers must provide training to each member of the housekeeping staff, including housekeepers and supervisors, in a language they can easily understand. Training must subsequently be provided to any new housekeepers or supervisors and to any housekeepers given new job assignments that

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require additional training. The training must be provided annually, and additional training, depending upon the situation, must be given if new equipment or practices are introduced.

The training must explain the different elements of the MIPP and provide an opportunity for employees to practice using the equipment and tools as well as ask questions about procedures. Information about the following must also be provided:

- Signs, symptoms and risk factors commonly associated with musculoskeletal injuries
- The process for reporting safety and health concerns and the importance and process for early reporting of symptoms and injuries
- Body mechanics and safe practices

Supervisors must be provided further training on implementing and overseeing the program.

#### **Workplace Evaluation**

The new regulations require a workplace evaluation to be conducted by Oct. 1, 2018, and to then be updated annually. The evaluation must be updated sooner if any new processes, practices, procedures or equipment are introduced or renovations occur that could change or increase housekeeping hazards. Additionally, the evaluation must be updated anytime the employer is made aware of a new hazard to housekeepers.

The evaluation must identify and address various injury risks that housekeepers may face on a daily basis in performing their duties. OSHA has provided examples of materials that can be used in conducting the evaluation.

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