

## Hu-Tech Newsletter no. 17: February 2005

Welcome to our February newsletter; in it we point you to some free internet resources which you may find useful. We would also like to invite those who are involved in the management of people with MSDs to participate in a short on-line questionnaire; this will contribute to a study we are conducting for HSE. We also bring you a reminder of our Ergonomics Essentials and IOSH DSE workstation assessors' courses.

### Safety reps website

A new and impressive website for safety reps has been developed by Amicus health and safety rep Dennis Mac. It contains a very comprehensive range of relevant information, and provides links and downloads on issues including UK safety law, the role and rights of union safety reps, and a large selection of reporting, risk assessment, inspection and other useful forms. It is written with safety reps in mind, but health and safety professionals may find it a useful resource. The website is available at: [www.dennismac.co.uk/hands/](http://www.dennismac.co.uk/hands/)

### ILO Encyclopaedia

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) *Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety* is now available on-line with free access. The printed version runs to 4 volumes, so there is a wealth of information contained within the encyclopaedia, including: the body and healthcare; prevention and management policies; hazards; tools and approaches. It is available at: [www.ilo.org/encyclopaedia/](http://www.ilo.org/encyclopaedia/)

### HSE study into Rehabilitation and Active Case Management for MSDs

You may remember that Hu-Tech has been awarded a contract by HSE into the costs and benefits of rehabilitation and active case management for those with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). As part of the study we would like to gain the views of people involved in the management of those with MSDs as to effective ways to do this. If you manage staff with MSDs and would like to share your experience, you are invited to take part in an on-line survey. It should take about 10 minutes to complete, and is available at [www.hu-tech.co.uk/question-rehab.html](http://www.hu-tech.co.uk/question-rehab.html). We will present a summary of the findings in the newsletter later in the year. Your help is greatly appreciated!

For your information, new guidance was published by both HSE and DWP into workplace rehabilitation programmes last autumn. More details can be found on their websites:

- [www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/sicknessabsence/index.htm)
- [www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/vrframework/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/vrframework/)

### The development of an Ergonomics Specification and Design of a generic inspection desk

Hu-Tech has been working closely with one of our clients to develop a specification for a new desk design to be rolled out to all its locations throughout the UK. The client operates from a number of different locations throughout the UK and following a major change in their work activities and operations, their staff member's physical method of working has changed significantly too. As a result the client became concerned that the design of the current inspection desk was not suitable. The number of cases of musculoskeletal problems amongst staff working on the current desks has increased since the changes were introduced.

Hu-Tech proposed a study to determine the functional and user requirements for the inspection desk and to develop a design which meets the needs of the task in an efficient and effective manner, as well as being safe and comfortable to use. As well as meeting current needs, the desk should as far as

possible be designed to accommodate likely future developments in working methods or the introduction of new technology.

Visits to the client's major sites throughout the UK were conducted by Hu-Tech consultants to develop a thorough understanding of the tasks conducted at the desk and establish whether there were any different methods of working adopted at their numerous sites. The visits were used to develop a task analysis and develop a requirements specification to ensure that the proposed design will meet all the task and individual requirements placed on it. This phase (Phase 1) of this work is still ongoing.

Phase 2 of the study will involve the development of a CAD generated mock-up, followed by a full physical mock-up. This will be trialled and tested to ensure it meets the requirements developed in Phase 1.

For further information this topic please contact: [taran@hu-tech.co.uk](mailto:taran@hu-tech.co.uk)

### **Ergonomics Training**

Places on the 5 day **Ergonomics Essentials (including DSE and Manual Handling)** course on **7-11<sup>th</sup> March in Edinburgh** are going fast, although we do still have a couple of spaces available. This course follows the British Occupational Hygiene Society's (BOHS) syllabus and gives delegates confidence and practical skills in tackling ergonomics issues, including MSDs and manual handling. It provides a good grounding for health and safety professionals who want to know more about how to reduce ergonomics risks in their workplace.

We are also running the **IOSH 'Assessing risks for computer users'** course again on **22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> February in London**. The course will enable delegates to become competent in undertaking DSE risk assessments as required by the DSE Regulations, and includes a presentation by Bill Fine of **AbilityNet** into computer adaptations for those with limitations.

Further details and a booking form for both these courses are available on our website (follow the link to training). Alternatively, please contact [margaret@hu-tech.co.uk](mailto:margaret@hu-tech.co.uk) (0131 718 4232).

If you would like any further information on any of these news items, please contact us on:

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