

Goodyear Tire & Rubber's Commitment to Ergonomics Training Shows Real Results



The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company continues to sustain its ergonomics process by making it easier for its employees to be trained in ergonomics principles. The mission of one of the world's largest tire companies is the same today as it was when it began its ergonomics process in 2007—to drive down the number of work-related injuries, or musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), recorded each year. Enter VelocityEHS.

To get started, the VelocityEHS RAPID Team Events® were conducted at each of Goodyear's 65 plants. A team of 8 to 12 people, facilitated by a VelocityEHS certified professional ergonomist, was trained in ergonomics principles. As a result of this training, the team could identify MSD risks, and then make low-cost, high-impact improvements to reduce those risks. On average, two to three solutions were implemented during each RAPID Team Event, and additional solutions were implemented at 30, 60, and 90 days later. In 2010, the company mandated all jobs and tasks be entered into the VelocityEHS former risk management software tool RPM™, an online tool for evaluating MSD risk factors and developing solutions, which allowed the plants to prioritize the jobs and tasks that required improvement.

The company continues its mission today and has established another new metric: to assign a risk score to every job at each plant and complete a certain number of ergonomic improvements each year. "It's not until employees know how to identify high-risk jobs that a job can be fixed," says Roger Tynes, Global Ergonomics and Special Projects Manager. To make it easy and convenient for every employee to be trained in ergonomics, the company invested in two new training programs. The first is a series of online e-learning modules available in the VelocityEHS Industrial Ergonomics system, an all-in-one solution for managing ergonomics in production and assembly environments. The second training component involves workshops led by an ergonomist or a certified physical therapist held in what the company calls an "Ergonomics Sandbox," a designated ergonomics center located at the Fayetteville, North Carolina plant, the first plant to adopt this program. More than a dozen workshops are conducted each week and, since the first formal workshop in April 2014, more than 2,700 hourly workers have been trained. Due to their success, the online training and workshops will

be implemented at an additional four North American and two European plants by the end of 2015.

These two training methods work together to engage Goodyear's employees. By learning how to recognize high-risk jobs and seeing how those jobs affect certain body segments, nearly 100 percent of Goodyear's employees are committed to attending trainings and fixing jobs.

"VelocityEHS Industrial Ergonomics has made us more efficient and has engaged our employees," says Tynes. In addition to the seven interactive e-learning modules and related assessment tools, THS comes with a management database to help deploy, monitor, and track ergonomics processes. The data entered results in a scored and color-coded executive summary report, categorizing jobs as either high (red), medium (yellow), or low (green) risk. The report also includes a human image showing the body segments that are affected by the different risk levels. "This color-coded visual gets the attention of management. I don't need a score, I need to not see red. When management sees that picture of a person with red all over it, it's the proof they need to change the job, and it gets funding," says Tynes.

Goodyear has taken this feature further, giving its design engineers' access to THS when designing new equipment and layouts. "The ease of THS is that it allows us to predict how much risk, if any, a new job will involve. If a newly designed job shows high risk potential, it gets changed. Only medium- and low-risk jobs are allowed on our floor. The biggest plus for me is knowing that our team has gone through extensive ergonomics training, that all jobs have gone through the system, and that the right jobs are going into the plants," says Tynes.

Since 2007, 6,900 jobs and tasks have been assessed. Of the 1,500 jobs that have been improved, 18 percent were in the high-risk category, 44 percent were considered medium-risk, and 38 percent were considered low-risk. Goodyear's plan is to expand the use of VelocityEHS Industrial Ergonomics and the Ergonomics Sandbox to all its plants worldwide.

Call Us Today

Toll Free: 1.866.919.7922

Or visit us online at: www.EHS.com

