

## Summary of CMBC MSK Discomfort Survey – December 6, 2018

### Introduction & Basic Information

111 people completed the survey

Job titles include: Accounting Clerks, Administration Assistants, Customer Information Clerk/Work Leaders, Data Administrators, Depot Coordinators/Work Leaders, Environmental Officers, Fleet Maintenance Assistants, Instructors, Maintenance Planners/Clerks, Operations Assistants, Schedulers, Transit Security Officers

Almost 50% of survey responders have been employed at CMBC for 10 years or more. 20% employed for 5-10 years.

### What Members are Doing for Work

32% (of 84 people) are required to ride coaches in motion. Nearly half spend 3-4 hours on a coach in motion per day, 22% ride for 2-3 hours per day, 14% spend over 4 hours per day.

63% (of 83 people) spend 6-8 hours on the computer per work shift. 50% of computer users have pain when using a mouse, 38% have discomfort when using a keyboard, 73% have eye strain while working on computer, 46% have had an ergonomic assessment at work and of those 39% say it helped relieve their discomfort.

38% (30 people) lift, push/pull or grip as part of their work duties, 25% of those repetitively lift 10-25 lbs, 35% of those lift 55 pounds or more, 80% of those have to power or pinch grip as part of work duties (38% power grip and 33% pinch grip for more than 4 hours per day)

### MSK Pain & Discomfort

75% of survey takers have felt MSK discomfort while performing their job duties:

- 52% have mild – moderate head/eye discomfort
- 47% have moderate-major low back pain
- 42% have mild-moderate upper back pain
- 37% have moderate-major right wrist pain
- 30% have moderate neck discomfort
- 20% have moderate left shoulder pain
- 20% have moderate right hand/finger pain
- 21% have moderate right shoulder pain
- 19% have moderate right elbow pain
- 19% have moderate right forearm pain
- 12% have moderate left & right knee pain

85% (of 80 people) have pain/discomfort after work hours related to work duties:

- Feet, ankles, knees, hips and legs hurt due to standing on coach in motion for prolonged periods, this increased when mandated to ride coaches for three hours or more
- Back, neck, and shoulder pain aggravated by sitting and/or standing all day at desk
  - Severe back aches from old/non-ergonomic chairs

- Back and neck pain from sitting and/or standing while training students and having to sustain awkward neck posture of 45 degrees
- Sore fingers, hands, wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, and backs after holding onto stanchions or steering wheels for an extended period; using significant amount of grip strength when performing ride checks, the pushing/pulling/braking/acceleration/swerving motions while keeping balanced make this worse
- Pain/discomfort lessens the longer employees are away from work

76% (of 78 people) report that their job makes their pain worse, 83% of those have received treatment to relieve their pain, 40% have missed work because of the pain/discomfort they had (of those 57% were off one week or less, 24% were off for 3 months or more).

### **How Job Duties Make Symptoms Worse**

Present job makes discomfort/pain worse because of:

- Three hours or more of standing on coaches on motion, including standing while coaches suddenly brake & swerve, accelerate and decelerate, and for periods longer than three hours.
  - Awkward postures while standing, watching trainees, and holding onto stanchions.
  - Constant balancing, bracing, and holding on builds up and presents as pain.
- Ergonomic desk set up:
  - Chairs offer little support, old chairs that don't adjust easily
  - Typing causes pain (38% have pain when using keyboard – wrists, forearms, elbows, shoulders, neck, back)
  - Using the mouse causes pain (50% have pain when using a mouse – feel pain/tingling in wrists, fingers, hands, elbows, forearms, shoulders, neck)
  - Sitting all day
  - Height of desks/tables and computers
  - No set desks, difficult to change between workers
  - No anti-fatigue mats to stand on despite having to stand for most of day
  - No breaks from repetitive motions
  - Increased volume of computer work has doubled, speed of work increased because of volume
  - 73% feel eye strain because of computer screens and fluorescent lights in office (headaches, eye discomfort, dry eyes)
- Ergonomic set up in vehicles:
  - The older vehicles haven't had ergonomic assessments

### **Reporting, WCB, and Right to Refuse Unsafe Work**

61% (of 76 people) experienced pain/discomfort and didn't report it to first-aid, only 16% filed a WorkSafeBC (WCB) claim related to those symptoms and only 50% (6) were accepted at first instance, 4 appealed and 3 won their WCB appeals.

Nearly 80% of survey takers know that work activities that cause or aggravate pain/discomfort are a hazard to the health and safety of a person. 71% know they have the right to refuse unsafe work but only 28% know the procedure to refuse to carry out unsafe work.

## **Suggestions to Improve Work Conditions**

Suggestions to improve work conditions to prevent/reduce discomfort/pain:

- More education about Health and Safety rights
- Ergonomic Assessments for people working with computers in an office and in vehicles
- Better chairs (some have such little foam you can feel the bolts, get new chairs in depot, Gateway locations), change tables to sit/stand desks, employees have their own work stations so that they fit the specific person working, better lighting, ergonomically friendly equipment and proper ergonomic assessment
- Switching up duties so that riding on coaches in motion is only necessary 3 or 4 days out of 7; reduce required bus rides to 2 hours per shift; alternate coach riding time with other duties so muscles and other soft tissues can rest
- Implement stretch/walk breaks outside of regular break times (for both office employees and those who work outside the office); employer can provide reminders to employees to stretch and take breaks
- New work boots more frequently
- Devices that allow instructors to see on community shuttles without bending forward, don't remove requirement for driver's skill assessment prior to hire (to reduce risk of striking brakes and getting into accidents)