

# MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY PREVENTION (MSIP) WEEK

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**CAPSC**  
Safety  
Services  
NEWFOUNDLAND  
LABRADOR

strength in  
**numbers**



## Fact Sheet #4 – Strength of Mind

The theme of this year's musculoskeletal injury prevention (MSIP) week is “**Strength in Numbers**”

Being aware of how to do work safely and being aware of the characteristics of the system in which we work is an admirable strength. A worker who is aware of other workers and the **number** of people in the vicinity who are affected by their actions can lend an element of safety to the workplace. For instance if a worker is required to lift a heavy item and is aware of the fact that it may be too heavy for them (and if there is no mechanical aid available to help them), might realize that there is strength in numbers. The strength of mind to be aware of this alternative, and not to hesitate to ask for help, is what this year's theme is all about.

Strength of mind also comes into play while people are working together. It could be the difference between a safe lift and an unsafe lift. Being able to assess that both you and your coworker need to communicate what you're lifting, where you're lifting it, and on what count you're lifting it, is necessary for a safe completion of that task. Picture an ambulance attendant and their partner at the scene of a collision lifting a casualty and having the strength of mind to effectively coordinate their efforts in order to avoid an MSI.

Strength of mind stems from knowledge.

Healthy and safe workers are informed workers. Each worker needs to assess how aware they are of the bigger system in which they work. Does their organization make it clear that they would like to know about hazards? Does the organization provide methods for a worker to make suggestions on how manual materials handling or workstation designs could be improved to reduce early signs and symptoms of MSI?

Some organizations may not make this clear (although the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations do require it). Workers with the strength of mind to seek these opportunities out if they're not clear, or to take advantage of them when they are clear, demonstrate an ability to contribute to a safe work environment everyday.

Employers themselves can benefit from strength of mind as well as their workforce by communicating clearly and often about the effective recognition, evaluation and control of workplace hazards.

By seeking out and gaining the input of the people performing the work, many innovative and creative controls can be implemented to reduce MSI hazards in the workplace.