



Applications within forestry industry:

Logging, Sawmills, Veneer & Board Mills and Office Staff

How the Job is Usually Done

Many jobs in the forestry sector require workers to be seated. Sitting for long periods compresses the spine and can be the cause of lower back pain and discomfort.

Ergonomic Concerns

Ensuring that the proper seat is purchased for the type of workstation is vital; it makes no sense for a control booth operator to use a typical office-type chair, or for a heavy equipment operator working in the bush to have a seat with little or no air ride. Whole body vibration is another concern for operators of heavy equipment and some control booth operators. The size and layout of the cab or booth can cause musculoskeletal disorders, as they force the operators to hold awkward or non-neutral positions, thereby placing stress and strain on ligaments, tendons and joints.

Recommended Adjustments

To minimize the amount of whole body vibration on equipment operators, make sure the seat is adjusted so it does not “bottom out” when driving. Whole body vibration can also be reduced by ensuring that the drivers choose an appropriate speed for the surface they are driving on. In mills, the location of the seat can have an effect on the amount of whole body vibration; some catwalks and machines cause whole body vibration. To reduce awkward body positioning, foot and hand controls should be adjusted to limit any twisting, bending, leaning or stretching. When operators get out of the cabs/booths, they should take a minute to allow the spine to stretch before doing any manual material handling. A full body stretch is ideal at this time.

Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association

For further information please contact OFSWA Consultant/Trainer – Ergonomist
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