

Medical Guidelines for the Workplace

There are approximately 3 million non-fatal injuries in U.S. workplaces each year, with substantial costs to individuals and organizations [over \$62 billion per year in total] (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Organizations can help prevent these injuries by identifying the medical conditions that affect an individual's ability to perform job functions. Further, if an injury occurs, the employer needs to determine whether an individual is ready to return to work, or what accommodations could help that person re-enter the workforce.

For decades, HumRRO staff have helped organizations identify the medical guidelines and standards that help an employer make well-informed, evidence-based staffing decisions related to the selection of new hires and employee return to work after an injury or illness. This work has benefitted both the employer and the employee by ensuring that an individual's capabilities are matched to the job requirements.

Our approach to establishing medical guidelines rests on three critical foundations:

1. Maintaining a rich, extensive database linking hundreds of medical conditions to thousands of job tasks.
2. Seeking input from the right professionals, including physicians in all medical specialties, exercise physiologists, biomechanists/ergonomists, and industrial-organizational psychologists.
3. Providing medical professionals with tools they can use to make sound decisions about an individual's health status and ability to perform essential job functions.

Developing Medical Guidelines

With more than 25 years of work in this arena, we have amassed an incredibly rich database that includes medical information for over 6,000 tasks across more than 200 diseases and conditions. Unique in the industry, this comprehensive source of information serves as the foundation that allows us to effectively and efficiently identify medical guidelines for industrial, public safety, and white-collar jobs through a clear, structured process:

- **Match** the target job's essential tasks and functions to those in the HumRRO Medical Database.
- **Specify** the ergonomic parameters and working conditions that impact job performance.
- **Extract** medical data for the target jobs that reflects the degree of severity of a medical condition or disease that impacts performance of essential job tasks.
- **Integrate** medical and job information from physicians to specify the medical guidelines for selection and return to work.

Our database and integrated processes are critical because they define the severity of symptoms, functions, and medical treatments that affect job performance. Thus, the medical guidelines allow for evaluation of an individual that aligns with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The medical guidelines and ergonomic and working conditions information for target jobs are consolidated into a Physician Manual for use by medical professionals.

Partial list of clients HumRRO has developed medical guidelines for:

- Federal Air Marshal Service
- National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
- Transportation Security Administration
- City of Alexandria, VA (200+ jobs)
- Fairfax County, VA (Fire, Police, Sheriff Depts.)
- Virginia Beach Police Department
- Pacific Maritime Association
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection



These manuals provide a standardized approach for evaluating an individual's health status in relation to job requirements. They also allow examining physicians to quickly identify diseases or conditions relevant to the essential job tasks and determine if a medical condition will affect performing a job's key functions.

This type of medical information is obviously critical for work that includes arduous physical tasks involved in public safety jobs like subduing a resistive suspect. However, medical issues impact the ability to perform work in many industries. Nearly 30% of jobs have moderate to strenuous physical demands. In addition, medical guidelines are defined for jobs involving fine motor and sensory skills (e.g., starting intravenous medications, visual acuity).

Wide-Ranging Impact

Our staff have conducted nearly 100 projects that have involved establishing medical guidelines, including the following efforts:

- **Identifying and implementing** visual acuity and color perception standards for over 20 intelligence analyst jobs, enhancing national security by ensuring that incumbents can effectively review satellite and hardcopy images.

- **Establishing medical guidelines** for numerous fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical services in public safety agencies at the local, state, and federal government levels and over 200 blue and white-collar jobs.

Focusing on job-relevant medical conditions during the assessment process plays a crucial role in preventing on-the-job injuries, as well as helping place individuals with a medical condition or disability into jobs they can safely and effectively perform. We welcome the opportunity to discuss how medical guidelines can help your organization put the right people into the right jobs and promote a culture of safety and injury reduction.

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HumRRO was established in 1951 and is an independent, nonprofit corporation dedicated to the development and application of state-of-the-art scientific principles and technologies to solve the real-world challenges facing private and public sector organizations and educational institutions. Our professional staff is composed of psychologists with diverse expertise in: personnel selection, classification, and promotion; education assessment and accountability; strategic human capital management; program evaluation and policy analysis; employee development and training; credentialing; modeling and simulation; and survey research. Our client base includes the military, government agencies, private industry, and professional associations. HumRRO is an industry leader in working collaboratively with clients to create customized, best-practice solutions.