

# POWER

PROGRAM FOR OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS, ERGONOMICS AND REHABILITATION



## Measuring Employee Abilities

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According to the Workplace Safety Insurance Board, the average workplace incident costs over \$60,000 according to figures from their annual statistical report. The human costs are just as dramatic and often staggering. These costs combined with the indirect costs of lost productivity and replacement workers represent almost a quadrupling effect.

Post offer screening, in which job candidates are put through a series of physical tests to ensure they have the physical capabilities to perform the essential duties of the job they are being hired to do, has the potential to substantially reduce employer disability costs.

A quantitative analysis was performed based on confidential data collected over a four year period. This analysis shows valuable results and provides solid justification for employers in their quest to control disability costs and decrease the number of accidents / disabilities in the workplace. The study involved a 500 employee plant in Ontario where repetitive injuries were a major concern and costs for the employer were significant.

The study was designed with a participating group (group one) and a control group (group 2); each group had 110 members. The data was analyzed predominantly with t-test (a statistical test that compares the average of one group to another) and correlation analysis. A financial analysis was also performed to determine the actual costs savings to group one.

When used properly, post offer screening is a cost effective means of ensuring a potential hire has the physical capabilities to perform the job they are being hired to perform. The absolute cornerstone of any post offer

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screening program is to ensure clear and concise guidelines exist around the process. Post offer screening is not meant to eliminate human resource screenings, but to supplement them and improve the positive outcomes of new hires. A 1996 article in the College Review noted that “pre-employment testing will not supplant traditional selection process such as interviewing and reference checks, but rather will enhance the selection process and reduce costs associated with turnover.”

Post offer screening programs need to include all of the following:

- Health history
- Physical therapy screen
- Objective computerized testing
- Workplace simulation
- Occupational health physician review

These components must be preceded with an accurate job demands analysis. The screening process itself must be carefully designed and developed to ensure it meets legislative requirements including: the identification of high risk jobs, a complete job task analysis, test design and validation of the process. The screens should include medical history, physical examination, and strength / flexible testing.

It is essential to match the capabilities of the person with the job requirements. It is also essential to monitor the results of the post offer screen for any adverse effects and workplace design issues that may be identified during the process.

## STUDY DESIGN

The quantitative study of post offer testing vs. non-post offer testing of candidates clearly reveals the post offer screening did make a significant difference in post hire injury behavior. As a point of clarity: in group number one if the candidate did not have the capabilities to perform the essential duties of the job, they were not placed into that job. Group two hired and placed the individual regardless of the results of a post offer screen. According to the study, 23 injuries and approximately \$2,073,000 in disability costs could have been saved in the group of candidates that did not participate in post offer screens.

### Comparison

	<u>Injury</u>	<u>No Injury</u>	<u>Injury Costs</u>
Group 1:	1	91	\$6,000
Group 2:	23	87	\$2,073,000

The study did not look at the indirect costs of disability because the actual costs revealed by the study were so compelling. Indirect costs are also critical and would

represent perhaps four times the direct costs.

The number of injuries in the non-post offer screened group was significantly higher than those that had passed the post offer screen prior to employment. The study also found that factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and pre-hire disability status had no impact on whether a candidate passed or failed the post offer screen. The data considered the following:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Pre-hire disability status (Was the candidate disabled prior to the screen?)
- Pass or fail outcome
- Post hire injury behavior
- Incurred workers' compensation costs