

Driving Change in Injury Prevention: Impact Stories from the MSD Pledge



The MSD Solutions Index (Index) is a survey developed by the MSD Solutions Lab designed to assess an organization's musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) prevention initiatives. It offers a safety maturity assessment focused on three main areas of MSD prevention at the organizational level — risk reduction, safety culture, and innovation and collaboration — and provides a holistic assessment of MSD prevention strategies. Organizations that participate in the Index receive scores that fall into one of the following five categories:

- **Innovating:** Indicates an organization should continue its current practices of learning and investing in new innovations, and share successes with others, and should also continue to actively search for ways to grow and improve.
- **Proactive:** Indicates an organization has well-executed prevention efforts where MSDs are anticipated and prevented before they occur, with some areas for growth and improvement.
- **Advancing:** Indicates an organization is building solutions to manage MSD risks and hazards, with several areas for growth and improvement.
- **Reactive:** Indicates an organization is responsive to injuries when they occur, with many areas for growth and improvement.
- **Novice:** Indicates an organization has few MSD prevention efforts in place, may not be fully aware of the issues related to MSDs or may not know where to start.

Organizations that are in the MSD Pledge community are offered an opportunity to complete the Index annually to better understand and track their progress in MSD prevention maturity over time. The Index was first launched to organizations in 2022, and to date, three full cycles of Index responses and subsequent insights have been generated. Annual findings from the MSD Solutions Index for [2022–2023](#), [2023–2024](#) and [2024–2025](#) are published on the MSD Solutions Lab website.

The first three cycles of the Index reveal compelling evidence of the success of organizations' participation in the MSD Pledge, and a growing emphasis on MSD prevention. Among organizations with three years of Index participation, several trends emerged, most notably a general improvement in MSD mitigation efforts. Specifically, 72.2% of organizations that completed the Index in all three years have improved their overall Index scores. Risk reduction scores were improved for 55.6% of organizations, safety culture scores improved for 77.8% of organizations, and innovation and collaboration scores improved for 55.6%. Lastly, 50% of organizations experienced increases overall and across all domains from 2022 to 2023 and from 2024 to 2025. Collectively, these results suggest that organizations involved in the MSD Pledge and completing the MSD Solutions Index are experiencing improvements to their MSD initiatives over time.

Other year-over-year trends since the first annual MSD Solutions Index in 2022–2023 include:

- An increase in organizations tracking more leading indicators than lagging indicators, emphasizing a shift from reactive safety efforts to proactive safety efforts
- An increase in organizations recognizing the impact of non-physical risk factors, such as stress, supervisor support or work schedules, implying that organizations are reaching a higher level of maturity by being data-driven and genuinely invested in worker well-being, rather than focusing solely on physical risks and regulatory compliance
- An increase in safety and health leaders stating they involve their frontline workers in decision-making and ask for their feedback when making ergonomic or workplace safety decisions, reflecting more [participatory approaches to ergonomics](#)

Seeing MSD mitigation efforts reflected in the data across the MSD Pledge community is powerful, demonstrating meaningful progress for many participating organizations, and the value of benchmarking tools like the MSD Solutions Index. Beyond these quantitative insights, several organizations have chosen to share a deeper, more personal look at their MSD prevention journeys. Through interviews and firsthand reflections, they highlight lessons learned, improvements made and the broader impact of their participation in the MSD Pledge and MSD Solutions Index.





**Pacific Gas and
Electric Company®**

Prior to participating in the MSD Solutions Index in the inaugural 2022–2023 cycle, PG&E had maintained an ergonomics program for more than 20 years — reflected in its overall *Proactive* and *Innovating* ratings for MSD prevention across three years of taking the Index. Even so, the team recognized an opportunity to move toward a more consistent, data-driven approach that anticipates and prevents MSDs, rather than relying primarily on lagging indicators and historical injury trends. The ergonomics team's goal became to confidently state that they operate a proactive ergonomics program enterprise-wide — one that identifies risks before injuries occur and directs resources where they are most needed.

Results in the Safety Culture domain of the MSD Solutions Index — where PG&E was rated at the *Advancing* level in 2022–2023 — highlighted specific opportunities to strengthen partnerships with frontline workers to identify and address ergonomic risks and ensure a centralized process for concerns to be raised. At the time, PG&E's ergonomics risk management system primarily supported office based workers and did not adequately address the dynamic and variable environments of frontline work. Findings from the Index led to the conclusion that achieving a truly proactive program required a more systematic way to identify and manage risk across both office and frontline roles.

In response, PG&E worked with Cardinus Risk Management to implement a centralized ergonomics risk management system to provide a consistent experience across the workforce. Core components include ergonomics risk factor training, customized self assessments with risk scoring and structured corrective action plans. In line with Index recommendations, the system also incorporates general health and wellness training and tools for people leaders to better support ergonomics through communication, workload considerations and resources to address risk.

These changes have strengthened engagement and early intervention by making ergonomics risks more visible and actionable. PG&E has seen increased participation in identifying and addressing risks, along with more consistent follow through on corrective actions. Leaders now have greater visibility into key risk factors and outstanding actions, enabling more informed decision making and support. PG&E has since achieved a *Proactive* rating in the Safety Culture domain.

In addition, PG&E's collaboration with Cardinus to develop this risk management system and engagement in the MSD Pledge community, through sharing [case study](#) experiences and consistent participation in benchmarking meetings, reflect continued progress in the Innovation and Collaboration domain. The ergonomics team at PG&E notes that the MSD Pledge community provides a valuable forum to learn from peer organizations, share challenges, and gain insight into different approaches to MSD risk reduction, and supports continuous improvement across industries.

Ultimately, PG&E's experience highlights the value of third party benchmarking in providing external validation and alignment with best practices, while helping uncover gaps that may not be visible internally. The ergonomics team at PG&E explained the value of the MSD Solutions Index as follows:

"Because MSDs are complex and influenced by multiple factors, the Index's research-based framework — addressing physical, mental, cultural, environmental and psychosocial factors — provides a well-rounded approach to program maturity and injury reduction. The report offers expert guidance, balancing near-term tactical actions with longer-term goals. Participation also lends credibility to the program, reassuring employees and leaders that initiatives are evidence-based and aligned with recognized best practices."



CONTACT US: msdsolutionslab@nsc.org



LEARN MORE: nsc.org/msd

