

# THE LEFT HANDER

## *Left-handedness in the workplace – Is there a concern?*

If you are a left-handed employee working on an assembly line or workstation that was designed by a right-handed person you would not have to ask "what is the concern?" Nine out of ten people are right-handed. That means nine out of ten designers are right-handed. These designers must be aware of the potential risks that may occur when a left-handed employee is forced to work on a right-handed machine or with a right-handed tool (Zavitz, 1998).

Should left-handed employees be required to maintain 100% efficiencies in a right-handed world? Should they be forced to use their non-dominant hand? These would not be issues if work was accommodated for the left-handed employee (Zavitz, 1998).

Think about the right-handed world ...

In the kitchen, a high number of utensils and appliances, such as ice cream scoops, potato peelers, knives, can openers, ladles, and coffee pots present major problems for the left-handed.

In the office, the number keypad on the keyboard is located on the right side and typically the mouse is set up and designed for a right-handed user.

In an industrial setting, heavy tools, equipment, power and hand tools, assembly operations, directions of conveyor belts, and controls on heavy equipment are typically designed and set up for right-handed employees.

All workstation designers should determine if handedness is a pertinent factor in the overall operator control layout (Garonzik, 1989).

Be sure to think about the "left-hander" when setting up or designing any workstation.

