Quick Tips
How to Assess Jobs with High Variability

We often work with clients in complex work environments with jobs that have long cycle times and high job task variability. These types of jobs are difficult to collect data on, as well as complete a task analysis and a valid ergonomic risk assessment. This obviously doesn't mean that these jobs should be ignored.

Our recommended approach is to break a long-cycle job into sub-jobs based on the main job tasks performed and assess each of these sub-jobs individually. A great example is a sanitation worker in a food processing environment.

A sanitation worker's job tasks vary greatly depending on the area and type of cleaning/sanitation tasks being performed. Work areas vary from cleaning mixers, ovens, conveyors, and extruders to kitchens, washrooms, and office areas. Where do you start with a job like this? The first step is obtaining a list of the main tasks performed by speaking to experienced operators and supervisors.

Then rank the tasks based on exposure to them, from both a time/frequency standpoint and number of employees who perform the task. Then take the top 5-10 tasks and assess each of these individually using valid, ergonomic assessment methods. The assessment methods and data must then be normalized to make prioritization meaningful across the tasks of the job.

Sometimes the most difficult part of assessing these types of jobs is breaking them down. Don't hesitate to contact us for assistance. Here at Atlas we have ergonomic experts in over 15,000 cities and towns across the US to assist if needed.