



The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment Regulations) 1992¹ lay down minimum health and safety requirements for work with Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

Compliance with the regulations is not difficult provided a common sense approach is applied to the way in which the staff work with display screens.

These regulations are aimed at preventing health problems, principally musculo-skeletal problems, visual fatigue and mental stress that may be associated with excessive or incorrect use of PCs and other office equipment.

The regulations require employers to:

1. Identify DSE 'users'.
2. Perform risk assessments of the 'users' workstations and review the assessment if there is a significant change or if the employer suspects the assessment is no longer valid.
Significant changes include: A major change in the software used, the hardware, furniture, increase in time spent using the DSE, increase in task requirements of speed and/or accuracy, relocation of the workstation and modification to the lighting.
3. Provide ergonomic control measures and work routines, as appropriate, to minimise the health and safety risks to the 'users'.
4. Make provision for 'users' to have eye and eyesight tests, if requested, and to provide basic corrective spectacles if required.
5. Provide information and training to 'users' regarding hazards, risks and control measures associated with their workstation.

Definition of terms

It is recommended that the following definition of a '**user**' should apply (*although the guidance to the regulations¹ gives more detailed criteria, the Occupational Health service considers the following definition to be reasonable in the circumstances*):

A 'user' is someone whose work requires the use of a display screen for continuous periods of an hour or more on most working days and the worker has little or no discretion on when or whether to use the display screen.

Who should do the Assessments?

A 'competent person' should undertake Workstation Assessments. This can and should be someone from within the Practice who has received suitable and appropriate training to enable them to undertake the task. Further information can be obtained from the Occupational Health Helpline (contact details inside the front cover of this manual).



Factors to be considered when undertaking Assessments

These have been tabulated in a tick box format as part of the Occupational Health Guidance overleaf. Fundamental to 'safe' use of DSE is not just the equipment itself but also the 'fit' or ergonomics between the user and the chair/desk/screen etc.

Eye and Eyesight tests

All DSE users are entitled to such tests on request. The employer is liable for the cost of the test and for any 'basic corrective appliances' needed for middle distance viewing, i.e. the distance at which the DSE screen is used. It is suggested that the employer should set a reasonable price (possibly in conjunction with a local optician) for the eye test and a basic pair of spectacles, **before** the individual attends the opticians. The 'user' would be liable for any costs over and above the basic price to allow for personal preferences.

Training and Information

The purpose of training is to increase the user's competence to use workstation equipment safely and reduce the risk to health. It should include: ²

- The user's role in correct and timely recognition of hazards and risks, covering both the absence of desirable features e.g. chair comfort and the presence of undesirable features e.g. screen reflections and glare, together with information on health risks and how problems may be manifested.
- Explanation of the causes of risk and mechanisms of harm e.g. poor posture leading to musculo-skeletal stress and eventual fatigue and pain.
- User actions to control the risks
 - Desirability of comfortable posture and the importance of postural change.
 - Use of adjustment mechanisms on equipment to minimise stress and fatigue.
 - Use and arrangement of workstation components to facilitate good posture, prevent over reaching and avoiding glare and reflections on the screen.
 - The need for regular cleaning of screens and maintenance of other equipment.
 - The need to have breaks and changes of activity.
- Organisational arrangements for informing the manager of any symptoms or problems.
- Information regarding eye and eyesight testing.
- The user's contribution to assessments.

Information

Further information is available at all times on these aspects of DSE use via the Occupational Health Helpline (see front cover of manual). See also the References below.

References

1. HMSO (1992) **The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations - Guidance on Regulations.**
2. HMSO (1998) **Working with VDUs** HSE INDG36.



DRAFT - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY

Practices may wish to use this draft as the basis for their own policy. Local conditions may indicate appropriate modification to suit the circumstances of individual Practices.

1.0 STATEMENT

In line with the ethos of the Practice Health and Safety Policy, the following organisational arrangements have been made with regard to the requirements of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 and for the protection of 'users' as identified within the regulations.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES of the NOMINATED GP (Health and Safety)

- 2.1 To ensure that the Practice Manager or other designated person receives training to enable them to act as a 'competent person' for the assessment of DSE workstations and to provide information, instruction and training to DSE 'users'.
- 2.2 To ensure that the workstations of all employees designated as 'users' are assessed and reviewed, where necessary, and that any reasonable control measures recommended are funded and introduced.
- 2.3 To fund DSE 'users' with eye and eyesight tests and 'corrective spectacles' if requested.
- 2.4 To ensure that the workload is realistic to the time allowed and that work routines allow regular breaks from DSE activities.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRACTICE MANAGER or other designated person.

- 3.1 To undertake training as a DSE 'competent person'.
- 3.2 To identify all DSE 'users'.
- 3.3 With the aid of a 'pro forma' and involvement of the individual, assess the workstations of all 'users' on a regular basis and whenever there are significant changes to the conditions of use (see introduction para 2).
- 3.4 To make recommendations for the introduction of ergonomic control measures, including work routines, as appropriate to minimise the health and safety risks to the 'user'.
- 3.5 To provide information, instruction and training for all 'users' regarding hazards, risks and control measures associated with their workstation.
- 3.6 To ensure that all 'users' are aware of the arrangements in place for eye and eyesight testing and for the provision of 'corrective spectacles' where required.
- 3.7 To seek advice and where appropriate refer to the Occupational Health service any 'user' who reports symptoms that are not easily resolved by the introduction of appropriate control measures.
- 3.8 To keep records of any DSE related training in the individual 'users' training record.

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4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES of EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 To attend any training session arranged regarding their work with DSE.
- 4.2 To co-operate with the competent person, and where appropriate the Occupational Health Nurse, in finding and implementing acceptable ergonomic and other control measures.
- 4.3 To report immediately any symptoms experienced which may be associated with DSE work and, where necessary, be referred to the Occupational Physician for independent medical opinion and advice.
- 4.4 To meet any additional costs for frames/lenses of a higher specification than the cost of basic 'corrective appliances'.





ASSESSMENT OF DSE WORKSTATION

This form is for the use of 'competent persons' who have received training to undertake workstation assessments.

Name of User:		
Job:		
Location:		
Hours worked per day:		Number of days worked per week:
Average % of working time spent on DSE use:		
Keyboard %		Mouse %
Does the 'user' wear spectacles?	Yes/No	(please circle)
If Yes, are they for near vision/distance vision/both?		(please circle)
Does the 'user' wear contact lenses?	Yes/No	(please circle)

<u>1. User's Health and Wellbeing, Information and Training</u>	Please Tick	
	Yes	No
1.1 Has the 'user' been informed of the risks of working with DSE, the requirements of The 1992 Regulations, and how to adjust their workstation?		
1.2 Has the 'user' received specific training for DSE work?		
1.3 Has the 'user' been advised to make regular task changes away from the screen (e.g. 5 minutes every 30 minutes)?		
1.4 Does the 'user' suffer from any pains or sensory loss (e.g. "tingling" or "pins and needles") in the wrists, arms, shoulder or neck?		
1.5 Does the 'user' have problems with vision (e.g. headaches, blurred vision, eye discomfort, difficulties seeing or reading the screen or source documents)?		
1.6 Does the user have any back pain?		
1.7 Does the 'user' have any other health conditions, which they feel relate to DSE work?		
1.8 Is the 'user' pregnant?		
1.9 Has the 'user' been offered an eye test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On request? • At regular intervals? • If experiencing visual difficulties? 		
1.10 Has the 'user' been advised how and to whom to report any concerns regarding DSE work?		



<u>2. Workchair</u>	Please tick	
	Yes	No
2.1 Is the chair stable and does it have 5 castors?		
2.2 Does the chair swivel freely?		
2.3 Is the seat height adjustable?		
2.4 Is the back of the chair adjustable for support?		
2.5 Does the chair have arms? If yes, are they half arms and height adjustable?		
2.6 Can the chair be moved close to the desk, thus keeping the 'user's' lower back in contact with the chair back (to provide lumbar support)?		
2.7 Can the user rest their feet flat on the floor when seated?		
2.8 Would a foot stool be of benefit?		
2.9 If yes, has one been supplied?		

<u>3. Work surface</u>	Please tick	
	Yes	No
3.1 Is the work surface of adequate depth to allow the screen to be moved away from the 'user' to a comfortable viewing distance (recommended minimum 600mm)?		
3.2 Is the work surface of sufficient width to allow a flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment e.g. printer/scanner (recommended minimum 1200mm)?		
3.3 Is the knee space of sufficient width (recommended minimum 580mm)?		
3.4 Is the knee space of sufficient depth (recommended minimum 450mm)?		
3.5 Is there enough room to pull the chair up, without the top of the legs touching the underside of the work surface?		
3.6 Would a document holder be of benefit?		
3.7 If a document holder has been supplied, is it stable and adjustable and positioned so as to minimise the need for uncomfortable head and eye movements?		



<u>4. Display Screen</u>	Please tick	
	Yes	No
4.1 Is the display screen separate from the keyboard?		
4.2 Is the screen placed directly in front of the 'user'?		
4.3 Is the screen at the appropriate height? (10 degrees below eye level for touch typists/45 degrees below eye level for other typists)		
4.4 Does the screen swivel and tilt easily?		
4.5 Are the brightness and contrast easily adjustable by the user?		
4.6 Is the image on the screen stable and free from flicker?		
4.7 Is the screen free from reflective glare (e.g. from windows or lights)?		
4.8 Is screen cleaning kit made available and used regularly?		

<u>5. Keyboard</u>	Please tick	
	Yes	No
5.1 Can the keyboard be tilted and is it separate from the screen?		
5.2 Is the space in front of the keyboard sufficient to provide support for the 'user's' hands (about 75mm)?		
5.3 Would a wrist support be of benefit?		
5.4 If yes, has one been supplied?		
5.5 Are the symbols on the keys clear and legible?		

<u>6. Mouse</u>	Please tick	
	Yes	No
6.1 Is the mouse within easy reach at all times?		
6.2 Is it free-moving - no tight cable and the roller-ball clean and free from fluff underneath?		
6.3 Is the mouse shape comfortable to hold and adapted for left hand use if required?		
6.4 Has a mouse mat been provided for ease of movement?		
6.5 Would a wrist pad be of benefit?		
6.6 If yes, has one been supplied?		



7. Telephone	Please tick	
	Yes	No
7.1 Is it easily reached without stretching or twisting?		
7.2 When in use, is it ever hooked between ear and shoulder?		
7.3 If telephone use is excessive or necessitates simultaneous computer use, would a hands free set be of benefit?		
7.4 Is the volume satisfactory?		

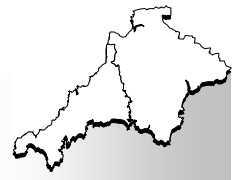
8. Environment	Please tick	
	Yes	No
8.1 Is the general lighting of the room of an adequate standard?		
8.2 Would a desk lamp be of benefit?		
8.3 Does the positioning of the workstation permit the user a long-distance view, in order to allow the eyes to focus on distant objects?		
8.4 Are windows fitted with adjustable non-reflective blinds, to prevent glare or reflection?		
8.5 Is the printer positioned for ease of use without twisting or stretching?		
8.6 Is the noise level low enough not to cause distraction?		
8.7 Are temperature and humidity maintained at comfortable levels? (Temperature 16+ degrees C, relative humidity 60%)		
8.8 Is the ventilation adequate and draught free?		
8.9 Are the wires and cables safely positioned?		
8.10 Is the computer checked for electrical safety every year? (There must be a label on the computer, including date of last check).		

9. Software	Please tick	
	Yes	No
9.1 Is the software suitable for the task?		
9.2 Has the 'user' received training to use the software?		
9.3 Is the 'user' using the system in the manner for which it was designed?		



<u>10.State recommendations/actions taken as a result of this assessment?</u>			
Point	Recommendations	Actions	Review Date

Name of 'user':	
Name of Assessor:	Name of Manager: (If different)
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:



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