

4.17 Display Screen Equipment

Scope of this chapter

The company accepts its duty to comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 implement as amended require employers to minimise the risks in VDU work by ensuring that workplaces and jobs are well designed.

Staff are given access to all information that identifies areas of risk. Staff will be given the necessary training and health and safety induction to manage such risk. Areas covered are:-

- General office duties, including filing, housekeeping etc.
- Display Screen Equipment (VDUs) and typing.
- Use of electrical equipment.

Display Screen Equipment

Display Screen Equipment, more commonly known as visual display units or VDUs, includes the monitors used in connection with computers. Using computers for typing or other activities for long periods at a time may give rise to adverse health effects if adequate controls are not put in place.

Managers should identify any employee within their organisation who routinely (daily) sits down at a VDU for greater than one hour at a time to work, without interruption. Interruptions include both work (e.g. answering the telephone, filing etc) and non-work activities (i.e. breaks).

Any employee falling into the category must have their workstation assessed against the assessment criteria on the Workstation Assessment Sheet. Managers should undertake the assessment and it should be completed or reviewed each time:

- a) A new employee is taken on to work at a VDU.
- b) New equipment is provided or when equipment is replaced.
- c) Working patterns change (i.e. longer periods of time spent at a VDU).
- d) The work area is rearranged, moved or relocated.

Once the Workstation Assessment Sheet has been completed, any improvements that are identified as required should be implemented as soon as they reasonably can be.

The Workstation Assessment Sheet should always be completed with the employee who will be using the workstation.

Ensure workstations meet minimum requirements

These requirements are good features that should normally be found in a workstation, such as adjustable chairs and suitable lighting. They are set out in a schedule to the Regulations, covering screens, keyboards, desks, chairs, the work environment and software. All workstations covered by the Regulations now have to comply, to the extent necessary for the health and safety of workers.

Plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity

As the need for breaks depends on the nature and intensity of the work, the Regulations require breaks or changes of activity but do not specify their timing or length. However, the guidance on the Regulations explains general principles, for example short, frequent breaks are better than longer, less frequent ones. Ideally the individual should have some discretion over when to take breaks.

On request arrange eye tests, and provide spectacles if special ones are needed

Where an employee who is deemed a “user of display screen equipment” requires an eyesight test, Bryn Melyn will pay for the eye examination. Where corrective spectacles are required for working with DSE then Bryn Melyn shall pay either the whole cost or contribution towards the cost of the corrective spectacles.

It is recommended that all staff who work with VDU's or all workstations complete an assessment and are assessed to ensure any risk is reviewed/controlled or eliminated.

Provide health and safety training and information

Employers have to provide training, to make sure employees can use their VDU and workstation safely, and know how to make best use of it to avoid health problems, for example by adjusting the chair.

Information should also be provided about VDU health and safety. Bryn Melyn will ensure staff have accessed this information contained in this section.

Making adjustments to suit your needs

Make full use of the equipment provided, and adjust it to get the best from it and to avoid potential health problems. Set up the workstations properly, to be as comfortable as possible.

Here are some practical tips:

Getting comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU;
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need;
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements;
- Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light;
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment;
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

Keying in

Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.

Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.



Reading the screen

Using a mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used;
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly;
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room;
- Make sure the screen surface is clean;
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa);
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation);
- Alternate screen time with other tasks such as filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, then the assessment should have planned rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

What should I do if I have any problems?

- Any VDU health related problems connected with work should be discussed with the line manager. Bryn Melyn encourage early reporting of health problems, to both help sufferers obtain treatment they need, and help them return to work.

Revision History

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