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H & S Guidance - Display Screen Equipment

INTRODUCTION

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 seek to protect the health of workers by reducing risks from work with Display Screen Equipment (DSE), including standard office VDU's (visual display units). Definitions used in the Regulations include:

'user'-an employee who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of his/her normal work.

'operator'-a self-employed person who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of his/her normal work.

'workstation'-includes any assembly of DSE, accessories, furniture and immediate work environment.

Factors that could be considered in establishing whether a person is a 'user' include duration, frequency, intensity and pace of spells of continuous use of DSE, amount of discretion over extent and methods of DSE use and if significant training or skills are required. Illustrative examples are provided in booklet L26, pp 7-11 (See References/Further Details)

Hazards of DSE work include Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs), temporary eye strain and headaches, and fatigue/stress.

Don't assume you need consultants to help you comply. You will probably need outside help for eye testing and any investigation of serious aches and pains. Simple problems however, will not require specialist expertise.

WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS REQUIRE?

Analysis/assessment of workstations used by 'users' to be carried out by employers. This assessment should be suitable and sufficient, systematic, appropriate to the degree of risk, comprehensive and consultative. Other than in the simplest cases it should be recorded and kept accessible. It should also be reviewed in the light of any changes in the workstations or users etc. Any risks identified must be reduced to the lowest extent reasonably practicable as quickly as possible.



Wilkins Safety Group

A good checklist can be found in HS(G) 90 (pp14-17) (see References/Further Details). This is just one way of several to carry out an assessment relating to equipment, environment and task design/software.

Workstations - must meet minimum requirements, laid down in a Schedule to the Regulations, summarised as follows:

SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THE SCHEDULE

- 1) Adequate lighting
- 2) Adequate contrast, no glare or distracting reflections
- 3) Distracting noise minimised
- 4) Leg room and clearances to allow postural changes
- 5) Window covering
- 6) Software appropriate to task, adapted to user, provides feedback on systems status, no undisclosed monitoring
- 7) Screen stable image, adjustable, readable, glare/reflection free
- 8) Keyboard usable, adjustable, detachable, legible
- 9) Work surface allows flexible arrangements, spacious, glare free
- 10) Work chair adjustable

SEATING AND POSTURE FOR TYPICAL OFFICE TASKS

- 1) Seat back adjustability
- 2) Good lumbar support
- 3) Seat height adjustability
- 4) No excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees
- 5) Foot support if needed
- 6) Space for postural change, no obstacles under desk
- 7) Forearms approximately horizontal
- 8) Screen height and angle should allow comfortable head position
- 9) Screen height and angle should allow comfortable head position
- 10) Space in front of keyboard to support hands/wrists during pauses in keying

Illustrations are contained in booklet L26 (DSE Work-Guidance on Regulations)

Daily work routines of users need to be planned to periodically interrupt work on DSE. Short frequent breaks from the use of DSE/changes of activity are better, and it is preferable if 'users' have discretion over their timing. NB: The length of break



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required is not set down in the law. Needs will vary depending on the work done.

Eye and Eyesight Tests - 'users' are to be provided with appropriate eye and eyesight tests on request. The cost of these tests and any prescribed corrective appliances for DSE use only must be met by the employer.

Training - for all 'users', which should include hazards and risks, procedures, arrangements, DSE Regulations and assessments.

Provision of Information - about health and safety relating to users' workstations and measures taken by the employer in compliance with specified duties under certain appropriate regulations.

CHECKLIST - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Have you identified 'users' of DSE in your business and the workstations they use?

YES/NO

Have you trained both 'users' and assessors?

YES/NO

Have you assessed workstations and reduced any identified risks?

YES/NO

Have you a system for indicating when assessments may need reviewing?

YES/NO

Have you planned changes of activity or breaks for users?

YES/NO

Do you provide eye and eyesight testing and any necessary special corrective appliances or work with DSE?

YES/NO



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Do you ensure that new workstations comply with the Schedule to the Regulations?

YES/NO

Do you inform 'users' about what you have done?

YES/NO

REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS

Booklet L26: Display Screen Equipment Work - Guidance on Regulations (HSE) ISBN 0-7176 - 0410 - 1

Booklet HS(G) 90: VDU's - an easy guide to the regulations

ISBN 0-7176 - 0735 - 6 (HSE)(1999)(£5.00)

Leaflet IND(G) 36L - Working with VDUs (HSE) **HSE Leaflet - Working with VDU's**

CIBSE Lighting Guide Number 3 - Lighting for Visual Display Terminals (ISBN 0 900953 41 1)

(CIBSE, 222 Balham High Road, London SW1Z 9BS)

Booklet HS(G)57 - Seating at Work (HSE)

ISBN 0-11 - 885431 - 3

Booklet HS(G)38 Lighting at work (HSE)

ISBN 07176 04675

Booklet HS(G)60 Work Related Upper Limb Disorders: a guide to prevention (HSE)(1998)(£4.75)

ISBN 07176 04756