

SAFETY ADVICE FOR USERS OF DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

A. POSSIBLE HEALTH EFFECTS DUE TO EXCESSIVE USE OF DSE

These effects may include pain, aching, or sensory loss (i.e. tingling or pins and needles) in the neck, back, shoulder or upper limbs.

You may suffer from restricted joint and finger movements or impaired grip.

All the above symptoms have been called Repetitive Strain Injuries. They may also occur in people who do not use DSE.

Excessive use of DSE may result in the following symptoms: headaches, focusing difficulties, eye discomfort or problems in seeing or reading the screen or source documents.

B. ACTIONS IF YOU SUFFER APPARENT HEALTH EFFECTS

If you experience any of the above difficulties, contact your supervisor to discuss the problems. If the problems cannot be resolved, contact your Building Safety Adviser for further advice and information.

Above all, do not wait for any physical symptoms to become persistent or chronic before seeking help and advice.

The following checklist is designed to minimise the risk of incurring any of the above apparent health effects.

C. CHECKLIST

(i) Starting the Day

1. Minimise screen glare by setting your screen at a right angle to windows or other sources of glare. Set the screen's brightness control to suit the lighting in your room. If necessary, clean the screen.
2. Adjust your seat height until your forearms are horizontal to the keyboard, ensuring that your wrists are straight when your hands are on the keyboard.. This is an 'ideal' position which you should use if you find it comfortable. If it is not, select a position which you find is best for you to operate the keyboard. Nevertheless, avoid positions which make the hand bend at exaggerated angles to the wrist.
3. Don't sit on the edge of your chair. Sit right back, allowing the backrest to support you. Keep your lower back in a relaxed inward curve, adjusting your backrest to give support for this position.
4. If your feet are now not touching the floor, use a footrest. Alternatively, if your desktop height is adjustable, adjust this so that your feet are comfortably on the

floor. Make sure that there is nothing under your desk that prevents you sitting properly upright.

5. Place your copystand close to the screen, next to the display and at the same height and viewing distance. Make sure that your viewing distance from the screen allows you to read both screen characters and copy text easily.
6. Make sure that you can turn the pages on your copy text without having to lean forward. Now adjust the screen and copystand angle to suit your sitting posture.
7. If you are not using a copystand, offset your display screen so that you do not have to lean sideways to read the document you are typing from.
8. Rest your arms and shoulders when your working routine allows you to.

(ii) Screen Breaks

1. Short frequent breaks are better than the odd long break. A 5-10 minute break after 50 minutes is likely to be better than 15 minutes every two hours.
2. If possible, your break should be taken away from the screen and you should try to exercise your back and legs by stretching and walking.
3. Undertake other work tasks during your regular screen breaks but don't strain wrists or arms during this time (e.g. writing, lifting heavy files or boxes of paper, etc.).
4. Rest your eyes during breaks. Avoid reading small print.

(iii) During the Working Day

1. Make sure that your workstation has not become cluttered or disorganised thus forcing you to sit in uncomfortable or awkward positions.
2. If room light levels have altered during the day, re-adjust the brightness control. Check for sources of glare and take steps to reduce it (e.g. lower blinds if sunlight is falling on the screen and affecting ease of vision).
3. Push your screen and copyholder back a little and adjust the angle to suit the new position.
4. Always organise your workstation in a way that helps you to sit upright, without having to twist your neck or lean over.
5. Adjust the angle of the screen so that you can view the characters comfortably without bending forward or peering. Reduce head and neck movement as far as possible.

This document (SSC/76/4) was compiled by Richard Price, Staff Welfare Officer,
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