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| **prefix** |
| **Display Screen Equipment** |
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| **Procedure** |
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# PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to protect display screen operators from the possibility of;

* Back ache
* Neck ache
* Sprains
* Strains
* Visual fatigue
* Headaches or migraines

# ASSESSMENT

1. A risk assessment, which will include an analysis of the workstation, is required to identify any hazards and then evaluate possible risks and their extent.
2. Analysis of a workstation should be related to the physical and mental requirements of the actual operator or operators allotted to that station and should be reviewed when the allotted personnel change. Where practicable, the operator should be asked to complete a self-assessment form to assist in identifying personal preference and concerns.

# LIGHTING

1. When considering the general lighting environment, the manufacturer’s light level specification for the specific display screen concerned should be identified and compared with the actual lighting level recorded at the operator’s working position. Excessive illumination can be as harmful as low levels. For this reason, readings should be taken over a variety of conditions where natural of artificial lighting levels vary during a working period or are subject to seasonal variation. Where necessary, flexible local lighting should be provided at the workstation. A major objective is that only reflected light rather than light directly from a light source should reach the eyes at the working position. Light arriving at the eyes directly from light sources should not cause glare or discomfort.

# LAYOUT

1. Display screens should not face a window or have a window as a background, where such positioning may create conditions of glare or reflectance for operator’s using the screen. Windows can also add to the operator’s physical or mental stress due to solar gain, lack of privacy, distraction, etc. Where such positioning is unavoidable, all necessary reasonable steps should be considered to ensure glare is reduced to a minimum e.g. blinds, curtains, etc. The control of the blinds and curtains or blinds should rest with the individual unless a group of employees are affected.
2. Where DSE’s cannot be placed to avoid major light disturbance to the operator, screens should be provided to mask the sources of the problem. The provision of screens may also give an element of privacy which can reduce operator stress and increase productivity, but they should not totally isolate the operator from social contact.
3. Ensure that the service clearance, access and operating requirements for the DSE laid down in the Manufacturer’s instruction are met, dependant on the operator’s individual physical requirements.
4. Ensure that cable runs do not create any hazard. Cables should not be run across accesses and should, where possible, be bundled and/or ducted.

# WORK DESK/SURFACE – WORK STATION EQUIPMENT

1. Consult the guidance literature supplied by the manufacturers of the particular display screens concerned for guidance about desks and tables. Discuss the requirements with the operators to establish any special circumstances which require consideration
2. Unless in exceptional circumstances, operators should be seated. All seating should be adjustable to suit the individual operator’s physical requirements related to that particular workstation and hardware.
3. Workstations should be stable and not liable to movement as a result of normal operating pressures. Consideration should be given to desktop height, thigh clearance, kneehole depth and width. These should be related to individual operator’s physical requirements.
4. For tasks consisting of prolonged and consistent use of a display screen e.g. data entry, keyboard height should be such that when the users' fingers are resting comfortably on the home-row keys the angle of the elbow should be 90 degrees. The equipment supplied should be capable of meeting this requirement. The keyboard should be able to be tilted and separated from the screen, allowing the operator to find a comfortable position, thereby avoiding fatigue in the arms or hands. The keyboard surface should be non-reflective. The space in front of the keyboard shall be sufficient to provide support for the hands and arms of the operator and the provision of wrist rests and other devices should be considered where extensive “mouse” operation is required.
5. The work desk or work surface should be sufficiently large for the operator to have all necessary job aids they require. Ideally it should be a large, low-reflected surface to allow flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment.
6. If a document holder is provided to support source documents, it should be stable, adjustable and positioned at a similar viewing distance and in the same plane as the screen, so as to minimise the need for uncomfortable head and eye movements. For vertical DSE screens, the top row of characters should be level with or just below the user’s eye height, when the user is in a comfortable operating position. For displays with tilted screens, in the operating position, the imaginary line joining the centre of the screen to the user’s eye should be about 150 below the horizontal. Unless otherwise stated, DSE’s are usually designed to be viewed from about 350 to 600 mm. Ensure that stations are deep enough for the screen to be viewed at these distances without restricting the work surface in front of the display.
7. Where existing furniture is to be replaced, ensure that the new furniture does not deprive the operator of existing facilities.

# OPERATOR’S CHAIR

1. The chair being provided should be stable and capable of full adjustment to suit the operator, i.e. seat and back adjustable in both height and tilt.
2. Where practicable, armrests should be provided.
3. Chairs should be easily moveable to allow personal adjustment related to the workstation.
4. An adjustable footrest should be made available to anyone who wishes to use one.

# EYES AND EYESIGHT

1. Tests to identify eyesight problems should be carried out by a competent person before any operator first begins work on DSE and thereafter at regular intervals (possibly annual). The test will also identify any necessary remedial action required, e.g. the provision of spectacles for use by an operator whilst at the DSE.
2. If the operator does not normally require the tests, or the provision of corrective appliances, then these will be entirely at the cost of the employer.
3. Where the operator’s work includes the wearing of eye protection, then corrective appliances should be to the appropriate grade of protective equipment.

# WORK PATTERNS

1. The operators’ shift work pattern should be designed in such a way as to intersperse concentrated viewing or working periods at DSE with breaks or other tasks which allow the operator to exercise and relax those physical areas subject to stress during the DSE operation.
2. Considerations should be given to the individual operator’s job. Pauses for non-DSE based work should be arranged so that they are taken prior to the onset of fatigue and not as a recuperative period from it. Short, frequently occurring pauses are to be more effective than longer breaks taken less frequently.

# SOFTWARE

1. The effects of software and programmes in relation to operator stress should be considered.
2. Software must be suitable for purpose and should be comprehensible to and suitable for the individual operator.

# MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

1. The employer should draw up a maintenance and testing schedule for all DSE equipment and workstations and draw this to the attention of the operator.

# TRAINING

1. All operators will require a degree of training and retraining in DSE practice and the individual equipment and software allotted to them. The employer should assess and record the level required for and given to individual operators.
2. Training may include the following areas:

* The risk assessment and workstation analysis prepared by the employer.
* The procedure and need for completing and submitting a self-assessment form for any workstation allotted to the operator.
* The arrangement of DSE equipment to prevent glare, tripping hazards etc.
* Operative’s seating position, its importance and means of adjusting it.
* Facilities for and the importance of, eye testing, correct spectacles, etc.
* The need for regular breaks and the facilities for this purpose.
* The operational software allotted.

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