



DSE Workstation Set up Guidance

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you understand how your workstation should be set up so that you feel comfortable and the risk of injury is reduced. You have a responsibility:

- to look after yourself and maintain a healthy working routine.
- to report any discomfort to your head of department/manager.
- to refer to your manager any problems with your workstation that you cannot rectify yourself.

Achieving comfort – the environment

The work area in which the workstation is situated needs to be maintained to provide reasonable conditions. Usual requirements for any workplace include the following:

- a comfortable temperature.
- protection from draughts.
- flooring without tripping hazards etc.
- good lighting arrangements.
- blinds fitted to any windows which allow direct sunlight to fall onto screens.
- positioning of artificial lights to avoid glare.

Detecting glare problems

If you think there may be a glare problem, switch off the screen and place a small hand mirror against it, if you can see a bright light fitting or an outside window, this is the source of the glare you need to deal with. In many cases some relief can be obtained by slightly altering the screen Position and/or angle.

Achieving comfort – the workstation

The correct desk and chair should have been provided, with a stable adjustable seat and stable desk to work from. The desk/work surface should be large enough to provide sufficient space for you to position the equipment correctly and also to arrange your work. Removing clutter from on top of and underneath your desk will give you more room to move. Since we are all built differently in terms of height and proportion, we all need slightly different working arrangements for comfort and you should arrange your workstation to suit your needs. Remember that if you share a workstation you may need to adjust your workstation before you start work.

The Chair

The chair should provide you with a comfortable sitting position and the following will help you achieve this position:

- The back should adjust for height and tilt to provide good lumbar support. Ideally, the back throws you slightly forward (it helps to keep the back straight for long periods of sitting)
- All chairs should be of the '5 castor' type and be able to swivel and move freely. Wheels should be fitted on carpet and castors on hard floor services.
- When the chair is adjusted for height, you should be able to place both feet flat on the floor (if not, you need a footrest)

- You should be able to get your knees under the desk. If you need your chair to be under the desk in order to provide a comfortable working position, the arms may need removing
- Your seated position should leave your forearms, when keying, to be approximately horizontal. Sitting at a twisted angle with the computer off to a corner of the desk will put a daily strain on your back and should be avoided. You should sit as straight on as possible with the keyboard and screen directly in front of you whenever possible.

The Screen

The screen should be in a comfortable position for the user and the following points will help to achieve this:

- The screen should be adjusted so that the top of the glass screen is at eye level.
- The screen should be sited to avoid glare from windows or lights. Blinds, light diffusers etc. should be installed to prevent glare
- the display should be stable, without evident flicker, with crisp images/characters and at a comfortable distance for focusing for extended periods (neither too close nor too far)
- The screen must swivel and tilt and adjust for brightness and contrast.

The Keyboard

The keyboard should be in a comfortable position for the user and the following points will help to achieve this:

- the keyboard must tilt and separate from the computer and should be at a distance which feels comfortable, typically a few centimetres in from the desk edge

The Mouse

The mouse should be comfortable for the user to operate and the following points will help to achieve this:

- The mouse should be comfortable to operate. There are different types of mouse to assist those where there is extended usage or if there are problems with gripping.
- Use a mouse mat to avoid exaggerated movements of the hand and wrist. Place the mat at the side of the keyboard for ease of use.
- Intensive mouse use can cause discomfort; this can be avoided by adopting a good posture and taking frequent breaks. It may also help to let the arm using the mouse hang down from the shoulder during short pauses between works.
- Ensure that the mouse is clean and free from dust since this can reduce its sensitivity.

Eyes and Eyesight

There is no evidence to prove that DSE can cause disease or permanent damage to eyes. However, long spells of DSE work can lead to tired eyes and discomfort if the workstation is not set up correctly. As a result, eyesight problems may manifest themselves when using DSE and an eye test is recommended.

Breaks

Short breaks should be taken from prolonged screen-based work on a regular basis (say a few minutes in each hour). These breaks do not have to be a complete break from work, just doing something different from looking at the screen/keying. Ideally, alternating work between DSE and other activities during the day will help counter fatigue and stress. The key factor is that breaks should occur before the onset of fatigue. Exercises will also help to relieve tired muscles:

- periodically stretch your arms and legs to help reduce fatigue
- Blink and focus your eyes on a distant object to help to relax the eye muscles.

Health

There are no proven health risks from radiation to operators of DSE, either in the short or long term. Any person suffering from photo-sensitive epilepsy should seek specialist advice before carrying out any work on DSE.

Laptops and Notebooks

Where laptops are used for extended periods, it is advisable to try and replicate a full-sized DSE set up as far as possible. This means raising the height of the screen to an appropriate position (using a laptop stand, laptop monitor arm, or other method such as books or files) to minimise head and neck movements, and using an external wired or wireless keyboard and pointing device.

Pregnancy

There is no evidence to prove a link between radiation emissions from DSE and pregnancy problems.

