

**Imperial College Union**

**Health and Safety Committee**

Tuesday 10 April 2018

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| **AGENDA ITEM NO.** |  |
| **TITLE** | Display Screen Equipment |
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| **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** | A number of hazards are associated with the prolonged and habitual use of computer display screen equipment. While comprehensive information is available for staff and students, Union management must not become competence about these hazards and ensure that staff understand the role they can play to minimise the risks of personal injury. |
| **PURPOSE** | This paper is highlighting the serious issues surrounding the Display Screen Equipment Regulations and drawing attention to our legal obligations.  Committee members are asked to come prepared to consider:   1. What’s the best way to ensure that employees are not complacent as the health impacts are not viewed as acute? 2. How can we ensure best practise in an organisation where there is a culture of passionate commitment to “getting the job done?” 3. What’s the possibility of a mixture between sitting and standing at workstations? |
| **DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED** | For Information and Discussion |

**Display Screen Equipment**

1. **Introduction**

Eye fatigue (temporary eye strain, but not eye damage), mental stress, headaches and musculo-skeletal upper limb disorders including pain in the back, hands and wrists can be associated with the prolong and habitual use of computer display screen equipment (DSE).

The likelihood of experiencing these symptoms is related mainly to the frequency, duration, intensity and pace of spells of continuous use of DSE, as well as the amount of control the user has over the level of display screen use.

Modern society relies heavily on their use. Not only are they used extensively at work, but virtually every family in the UK now has a computer, laptop or mobile device as well. Due to the common use of DSE there is a risk that this may lead to complacency about the hazards they can present.

In addition, there is a growing amount of research on other health effects associated with prolonged sitting including heart disease, diabetes, increased cholesterol and obesity.

DSE is defined as any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process. This covers conventional display screens, touchscreens and mobile devices.

1. **Our Responsibility**

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 states that Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.

Over and above this primary legislation, there are a number of relevant secondary legislation which governs the use of DSE in the workplace. These include:

1. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)
2. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended)
3. The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (as amended)
4. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 only apply to employers whose workers regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work (daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more). These workers are known as DSE users. These Regulations do not apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time.

The above regulations also outline specific and general employer duties which include:

* risk assessments of workstations in order to minimise the risks to users and to train users in correct working practices. (2 above)
* the correct selection of work equipment (including DSE) that is suitable for use (3 above)
* various standards with regards to the environment; eg, lighting, ventilation, and thermal comfort (4 above)

In summary the DSE Regulations require employers to:

1. Undertake risk assessments of workstations
2. Ensure work stations meet the minimum requirements
3. Plan work activities so they include breaks from DSE
4. Provide eye and eyesight tests on request and spectacles if required (for DSE use only)
5. Provide relevant information and training.

Employee themselves can form part of a risk assessment process by completing a computer health and safety checklist. A sample checklist is attached as a separate document.

1. **DSE Guidance at Imperial College Union**

Comprehensive advice and guidance is available on the College website which provides information on the legal framework surrounding use of DSE.

Imperial College Essentials induction for new staff covers the College’s approach to safety and includes the day one safety induction, Month One Safety Training, Specific safety training needs assessment form and Risk Assessment Foundation Training.

1. Next Steps
   1. Issue a reminder note to staff to advising them that they have been provided with adequate health and safety training and information in the use of their workstations
   2. Issue a reminder to staff about the health related risks of DSE
   3. Ensure staff members are aware of the self-assessment checklist
   4. Identify relevant individuals to undertake the Computer Health Assessor Training

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