

Health and Safety Statement and Policy Document

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

Choose ICT Limited (known in this document as CICT) are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all members of staff, learners and visitors to the company and/or involved in CICT undertakings.

- The Health, Safety and Welfare of all CICT employees is protected by law.
- CICT recognises its duty to protect its employees and to keep them informed about health and safety.
- In return CICT expects its employees to look after themselves and others.

CICT will consult employees regarding Health and Safety including:

- Any change which may substantially affect your health and safety at work, e.g. in procedures, equipment and ways of work.
- CICT's arrangements for getting competent people to help it satisfy Health and Safety laws.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with a full review at the end of March annually

- Information to be given on the likely risks and dangers arising from an employee's work, measures to reduce or get rid of these risks and what the employee must do if they have to deal with a risk of danger.
- The planning of Health and Safety.
- The Health and Safety consequences of introducing new technology.

In general CICT recognises its duties include:

1. Making the workplace safe and without risks to health.
2. Ensuring plant and machinery, including computers, are safe and that safe systems are set and followed.
3. Giving employees information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for their Health and Safety.

In particular, CICT recognises the following responsibilities:

- To assess the risk to employees Health and Safety on a regular basis.
- To make arrangements for implementing the Health and Safety measures identified as being necessary by the assessment.
- To provide adequate first aid facilities.
- To make sure that the workplace satisfies Health, Safety and Welfare requirements.
- To make sure that work equipment is suitable for the intended purpose, so far as Health and Safety is concerned, and that it is properly maintained and used.

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- To provide Health surveillance as appropriate.

As an employee of CICT you also have certain legal duties as follows:

- Every employee to take personal responsibility for their own, colleagues and learners safety and health, being aware of potential hazards and acting to ensure they are eliminated, managed or avoided.
- Observance of procedures established to ensure we work in a safe environment.
- To co-operate with your employer on Health and Safety matters.
- To correctly use work items provided by your employers.
- To not interfere with or misuse anything provided for your Health, Safety and Welfare.

Right of employment

- Whilst the company is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any person, it has to be mindful of the limitations of the centres it operates from when selecting employees and has a duty of care to ensure that any person offered employment can be reasonably and safely accommodated.
- To make sure that employment is not offered to people considered unsuitable for such work by the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

Training facilities – risk assessment

A formal risk assessment will be undertaken at least once a year at the end of March on each training centre owned or managed by the company. In addition any new centre or existing centre which has undertaken any change will undergo a new formal risk assessment. As part of the company's commitment to best practice, the H&S Representative shall, in addition, undertake regular ongoing assessments of all centres to ensure all laid down procedures and criteria have been implemented and operated.

This company's policy and procedures shall apply to all centres, whether under their own control or through third party ownership. All premises, however owned or managed, will be regularly inspected by the company's Health and Safety Representative and must meet all criteria laid down by the company. If third party premises are considered unsuitable and any requested remedial action is deemed inadequate, the use of the premises will be withdrawn.

This document must be read in conjunction with the company's Health and Safety Procedures, and forms an integral part of ensuring that management, staff and visitors/learners share a joint responsibility for implementing and maintaining best practice to provide a safe working environment for the benefit of all.

CICT Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

Whilst at work, health and safety precautions must be observed by everyone: not only does it make good common sense but, in many instances, the responsibilities are legal requirements. Ensuring the health and safety of others at work is just as important as the avoidance of being injured oneself. No one working at CICT has the right to endanger others, whether staff or visitors, and staff must share a common responsibility to set a good example.

Whilst this policy document has been prepared and provided by management for the benefit of all, the management welcomes constructive suggestions where any part of the policy might be improved, to further the aim of creating a healthy and safe working environment.

Health and safety policy statement

It is the policy of CICT, as far as is reasonably practicable:

1. To provide and maintain plant and equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risk to health.

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2. To make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risk to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
3. To provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure health and safety at work of employees, learners and visitors.
4. To maintain any place of work in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and to provide and maintain means of access and egress from it that are safe and without such risks.
5. To provide and maintain a working environment for employees and learners that is safe and without risks to health and is adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.
6. To provide such protective equipment and clothing as is necessary for the health and safety at work of employees and learners.
7. To encourage staff to set high standards of health and safety by personal example, in order that learners can take with them an attitude of mind which accepts best health and safety practice as normal.
8. To continually monitor the effectiveness of health and safety provision within the work place.
9. To keep the Health and Safety Policy under regular review and to duly publish and make employees aware of any amendments, such review to be undertaken at least annually at the end of March.

It is equally a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act and other statutory regulations, for everyone engaged in work or attending training at a CICT centre to exercise responsibility and care in the prevention of injury and ill health to themselves and to others who may be affected by acts and omission at work.

No person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the company in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Government legislation and Approved Codes of Practice in many cases establish minimum standards for health and safety at work. CICT recognises that these standards will be best maintained, developed and improved in consultation with persons providing professional, technical and medical advice. Hence every encouragement will be given for the formulation of quality health and safety policies.

The company Health and Safety Representative (Mark Pitfield) will regularly review information appearing on the HSE website.

The company will also use external guidance where appropriate.

Modus operandi

Disabled persons

CICT does not regard disability as a barrier to employment or attending its facilities as a learner and will, wherever reasonably feasible, accommodate such people with a disability.

However persons who have any form of disability, which they feel, might have a particular relevance to their health and safety should contact the company beforehand and systems and precautionary measures relevant to each individual's situation may then be assessed and accommodated wherever possible.

Learners and Visitors

All visitors and learners to CICT premises or facilities do so only with the permission of the Directors of the company and must follow all company health and safety procedures.

Outside Contractors

Every outside contractor undertaking work in a CICT premise must accept full responsibility for complying with the provision of the company's Health and Safety policies. The contractor will at all times take appropriate steps to ensure the health, safety and well being of staff and learners are protected and minimise potential risks e.g. obstacles, tripping and slipping hazards and to ensure such risks where unavoidable are appropriately signed to bring

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such hazards to the attention of learners and employees. Where possible work likely to cause a potential health hazard should be undertaken out of normal centre training hours.

Use of Hazardous Substances

The use of hazardous substances will be closely controlled and where it is necessary for such substances to be used, they must only be used in strict accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and appropriate warning must be given to other persons in the building at the time of their use.

A risk assessment for all work activities involving hazardous substances must be prepared before work commences, as required by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1988 or as subsequently amended.

Any hazardous substance used must be stored and kept under conditions recommended by the manufacturer and where appropriate, in a locked area away from employees and learners.

Reporting of accidents, occupational health and dangerous occurrences

All accidents, injuries, instances of occupational ill health, fires and dangerous occurrences must be reported immediately to a Director of the company so that the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) can be met. No accident should be considered too trivial to report.

All accidents and injuries must be entered into the Accident Book which is kept in each training location at the time of the incident, preferably in consultation with a member of staff. The company H&S representative must be advised immediately by telephone of any event that is considered serious involving injury or death, admittance to hospital or as a result of workplace equipment or facilities or where RIDDOR may need to be contacted. Otherwise the Accident book will be examined monthly by the H&S Representative and any remedial steps taken to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence instigated.

Fire Safety

- General fire prevention
- Fire routine procedure
- On discovering a fire
- On hearing the fire alarm
- Means of escape
- Disabled Persons
- Fire fighting equipment
- Fire fighting
- After a fire
- Fire Stewards
- Fire Drills

General fire prevention:

Fire is probably the most serious danger which employees have to face. It can break out almost anywhere and can affect everyone.

Nothing is truer of fire than the old adage "prevention is better than cure". Regular fire prevention routines are one of the simplest and most efficient means of preventing fire. The value of the nightly routine of switching off and unplugging electrical equipment (unless the equipment concerned is designed to run continuously), emptying waste bins to reduce combustible waste and closing the doors to all rooms cannot be over-stressed.

Fire routine procedure:

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All staff must be made aware of fire procedures which should be strictly followed in the event of an emergency at any training centre.

On discovering a fire: If you discover a fire:-

- Operate the nearest fire alarm. If no fire alarm is provided, shout "Fire".
- Leave the building by the easiest exit, if possible away from the area of the fire.
- Ensure that the Emergency Service (999) has been informed of the location of the fire.
- It is for the centre manager on duty at the time to take responsibility for managing the emergency procedure put in place.
- Where our training room forms part of a shared building, our emergency procedure will also have to incorporate and comply with the emergency procedures of that building and the duty manager must report to the building safety manager and take instructions from that person.

On hearing the fire alarm:

On hearing the fire alarm, leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit, closing doors as you leave. Lifts must not be used.

Means of escape:

It is essential that the means of escape from a building should function efficiently. Exit doors should be unfastened so that they can be easily and immediately opened from the inside without the use of keys. Exit routes must be clearly indicated and not obstructed or used as storage areas.

Fire doors play an important role in the precautionary system, their purpose is to contain the fire and to prevent the spread of smoke and toxic gases, which can be lethal even in small quantities. More people die through inhaling smoke than through burns. Fire doors must, therefore, not be propped or wedged open, to prop open a fire door can cost lives if a fire breaks out. In addition, all fire/smoke doors should be closed when buildings are empty.

All personnel must be familiar with the exit and escape routes from the building in which they are working.

Lifts must not be used in the event of a fire.

Disabled persons:

The Centre Manager should be involved in making arrangements for assisting any disabled persons in the building – see highlighted paragraph below

Evacuation:

Should a fire arise in a training centre and an evacuation procedure be put in place, the Duty Manager and staff should do their best to ensure the safe evacuation of all persons in the centre but if there is a life threatening situation then the safety of each member of staff is paramount and they must ensure their own safety, even to the detriment of other people in the centre.

The Duty Centre Manager will be responsible for taking the signing-in sheets with him/her to the assembly point and checking that everyone is present. That person will also be responsible for giving clear instructions following consultation with the emergency services when or if it is safe to return to the building. No person should leave the assembly point without their knowledge.

Fire fighting equipment:

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Four types of fire extinguishers are commonly used in England, each has a specific range of use - the extinguishing media used are: water, carbon dioxide, vaporising liquid and dry powder. The external appearance of each type of extinguisher may be different and each carries its own instructions for use.

Care should be taken to use the appropriate extinguisher on a particular type of fire e.g. do not use a water extinguisher on an electrical fire.

Fire fighting:

Only attempt to use extinguishing equipment on a fire if it is a small incident and safe to do so. Do not endanger life by trying to put out a fire.

The person discovering a fire must promptly initiate the emergency procedures listed above, unless they are entirely confident that they can extinguish the fire immediately, using an appropriate fire extinguisher, fire blanket, etc. Delay can be fatal as, once a fire is out of control, it can spread rapidly and cut off escape routes.

If possible, and only if you are not endangering your personal safety, attempts can be made to contain and control a fire until the Fire Brigade arrives. Make sure that you use the correct type of fire extinguisher. The wrong choice can turn a minor incident into a major event. Always remember to take a position between the fire and the exit so that your escape route cannot be cut off. Be aware of what is happening in the surrounding area and take account of your own limitations. If possible, always make sure that someone else knows that you are tackling the fire.

Remember, in the event of an emergency whilst you have a duty of care to other people in the building, your own safety is paramount and you should not put your own life in danger by remaining in the building to try to contain the fire or help others.

The greatest hazards to fire fighters are the effects of asphyxiate, irritant and toxic gasses, smoke and fumes generated from the combustion of plastics and other materials. Never attempt to fight a fire wearing a respirator or breathing apparatus. Leave this to the Fire Brigade.

After a fire

Even if a fire appears to have been successfully extinguished, it will still be necessary to ask the Fire Brigade to check that it has not unknowingly spread and that materials or the fabric of the building cannot re-ignite.

Do not attempt to return to the building until the Centre Manager has received the "all clear" from the Emergency Services Fire Officer and, only then, can the instruction be given to staff and learners.

Fire drills:

It is essential that the fire alarm system and a pre-arranged plan specific for the evacuation of each centre should be tested regularly.

Centre Managers, or the property managers if renting a shared building, should ensure periodic evacuation training sessions take place.

First aid

The following information is given for guidance only and if you are not competent to deal with basic precautionary procedures, do not attempt any action which ultimately could cause the person more serious injury. CALL FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE.

- General
- Principles of First Aid
- Immediate action
- First priorities
- Shock
- Electric shock
- Mouth to mouth respiration

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- Burns and scalds
- Eyes
- First Aid and the Law
- First Aid training

First aid general:

The guidance given in this section can only be the simplest instruction in First Aid. If you have not learnt basic First Aid measures, or have not been trained in First Aid, you must familiarise yourself with the name(s) and location(s) of your nearest qualified First Aider(s). It will be too late to try to find this information once an accident has happened. If there is no trained first aider on site then refer to the emergency services.

Principles of first aid:

First Aid is the skilled provision of treatment for a casualty or any person suddenly taken ill, using the facilities and materials available at the time, to save life and to prevent any deterioration in the condition of that person while awaiting the arrival of qualified medical assistance (usually an ambulance).

The company may have first aid trained staff but not always available at the centre but their knowledge will only cover basic principles. In the event of injury or illness it is prudent to call the emergency services. Staff are not permitted to administer medication, including basic medicines such as paracetamol and aspirin.

If an accident occurs, what should you do?

- Check your own safety! You are of no use if you become a second casualty. Use protective clothing and equipment where necessary.
- Only move a casualty if it is safe to do so and you know what you are doing. Often moving a casualty can cause further injury. However if it is a minor injury then a casualty may be moved into an upright position.
- Keep calm – assess the situation – reassure the casualty.

Speaking calmly to the casualty establishes consciousness and may provide useful information about the accident or illness and assist in eliminating continuing danger. If immediate danger threatens, remove the casualty carefully to a safe place without endangering yourself. If the person's clothing is on fire, roll the casualty on the ground in a coat or fire blanket etc.

- Get help at once if the injuries appear serious by summoning a qualified First Aider or calling the emergency services. Where possible ask another person to call for assistance so you can stay with the injured or unwell person.

First aid priorities Breathing:

- If the casualty is not breathing, start mouth-to-mouth respiration at once (see method below). The first minutes are vital.

Bleeding:

- If bleeding is severe, apply firm direct pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding, using hands, pads, dressings etc. Maintain pressure until professional help is available.
- If the bleeding is from a limb, elevate it 10" to 12" to reduce the blood flow.
- Do NOT use a tourniquet.

First aid shock: Trauma or fluid loss

- Keep the casualty quiet, reassured and comfortable.
- Keep the casualty warm by a light covering but do not overheat.

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- Do NOT give anything to eat or drink to the casualty as this may cause complications if medical attention is required.

First aid electric shock

- Do not touch the casualty until the current is switched off. If the current cannot be switched off, stand on some dry insulating material and use a wooden or plastic implement to free the casualty from the electrical source. If breathing has stopped, start mouth to mouth respiration and continue until the casualty starts to breathe, or until medical help arrives.

Mouth to mouth respiration

- Lie the casualty flat if possible.
- Ensure no obstructions are in the mouth (remove dentures, etc.)
- Ease constrictions at the neck, chest and waist.
- Place a rolled jacket or pad under the shoulders to arch the neck.
- Pinch the casualty's nostrils and draw the chin forward to open the mouth.
- Take a moderately deep breath and breathe steadily into the casualty's mouth (chest will rise).
- Lift your own head and allow the casualty to exhale (see chest deflate).
- Repeat this cycle at a rate of 6 to 8 per minute.
- Continue until the casualty resumes breathing unaided or until qualified medical services take over, however long this takes.
- If breathing resumes, place the casualty in the Open Airway (Recovery) Position and treat as an unconscious casualty.

Open airway (recovery) position



Burns and scalds

Burns and scalds, however large or small and from whatever cause (including chemicals) should be cooled by flushing with copious amounts of cold water for at least 10 – 15 minutes (longer if necessary). The affected area should then be covered with a dry sterile dressing or cling film (this does not stick to burns and prevents air and airborne contaminants coming into contact with the burn).

Never apply any lotions, ointments or anything similar to a burn or scald, COLD WATER ONLY.

Do not burst blisters or attempt to remove charred materials from a burn. Always obtain medical attention.

Eyes

Foreign bodies (including chemicals) in the eye should be flushed out using clean cool water for at least 10 – 15 minutes. Sterile eye wash bottles of the sealed cap type may be used if tap water is not immediately available. Casualties with eye injuries should always be sent to the hospital with the eye covered by a pad.

Wherever possible the casualty should be taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

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Whenever possible staff should wear protective clothing, particularly gloves, when treating any injured or ill person to minimise the risk of transferring infection to the member of staff.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Emergency Situations
- Lifts
- Systems of Work
- Housekeeping
- Smoking
- Safety Signs
- Manual handling of loads
- Vehicles
- Asbestos

Emergency situations:

Every person has a responsibility to find out what to do in the event of an emergency situation arising in the workplace. Each person should determine, before any emergency occurs, the location of the telephones, the fire alarms, the emergency fire exits and the fire fighting equipment, and the location of first aid materials, in the area of the building where he or she normally works. If appropriate, the whereabouts of other emergency equipment, such as breathing apparatus and emergency control valves and switches, etc., should also be known.

Lifts:

Lifts must not be used in the event of a fire.

Systems of work:

It is important to understand, and thereafter to follow, any special instructions laid down for the handling of mechanical and electrical apparatus, and also substances and organisms, especially those that are toxic, flammable, explosive, radioactive or infective. No apparatus should be operated, nor any dangerous materials handled, unless the person(s) involved fully understands the hazards involved, has assessed the likely risk, and has instituted the required precautions. Any operations considered to be hazardous should be carried out only by a person who appreciates the nature of the hazards, only in a place suitably equipped to control the hazards, and only when assistance can be readily summoned, if required. If it should be necessary to decant liquids or solid materials, such as bulk supplies of cleaning materials or solvents, into smaller containers these containers must be suitably constructed, stoppered and re-labelled correctly. Adequate eye and hand protection must always be used when there is a danger from splashing.

Personal protective equipment should only be used where there is no other practical means of eliminating or controlling the risk. Protective equipment should only be used after it has been positively assessed to provide an effective defence against the hazard concerned.

Housekeeping:

A major cause of accidents is undoubtedly poor housekeeping and, in general, a safe working area is a tidy area. Apparatus and other materials which are not immediately required should always be returned to a safe storage place, and unwanted materials, particularly combustible and flammable items, should be disposed of safely and promptly. Any spillages must be cleaned up immediately by a person who fully appreciates the special hazards which the material may possess.

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Flammable and combustible materials must never be stored or left on emergency exit routes or blocking immediate access to fire alarms, fire equipment or electrical switchgear.

Gas, water and electricity, and any piped gas or liquid, supplies should always be turned off when not required, and especially at the end of the working day.

Smoking:

CICT operates a NO SMOKING policy in all its offices and training centres, in the interests of health and safety and in accordance with the law. Smoking is also not permitted immediately outside of its offices and training centres. Managers organising training in third party premises must comply with that organisation's smoking policy but in any event smoking will not be permitted in CICT training rooms.

Safety signs:

Signs providing safety information must conform to the Safety Signs and Signals Regulations, 1996.

Manual handling of loads:

Many of the accidents reported each year are associated with the manual handling of loads. Sprains and strains, particularly of the back, are the injuries which most often occur. In many cases, these injuries result in a temporary absence from work but can sometimes be serious enough to lead to permanent disablement. It is often not appreciated that many manual handling injuries are cumulative rather than being directly attributable to any single handling incident. It is, therefore, vitally important that manual handling accidents are reported to Health and Safety Director, so that hazardous operations can be promptly identified and remedial action taken to prevent repetition.

Company regulations and associated guidance require that each member of staff **MUST** undertake at least a mental risk assessment before undertaking any manual handling operation so as to reduce the risks of injuries. These assessments should take into account four factors: the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability. The views of staff are of particular value in identifying manual handling problems. Employees should report any problems experienced with manual handling operations to their immediate supervisors/managers.

Vehicles:

All staff must ensure that if they are using their own vehicles for work purposes they comply with all legislative requirements and are in a sound road worthy condition with a valid MOT certificate if appropriate.

All vehicles must be taxed and insured, with appropriate cover extended to cover business use where appropriate.

Drivers must abide by alcohol limitations and, if transporting other members of staff or learners, must ensure that they do not jeopardise the safety of their passengers.

Drivers must not use hand-held mobile phones to make or receive calls whilst driving vehicles on company business except in the case of an emergency where it is unsafe or impracticable to stop.

The company will not be responsible for any legal action against its employees who disregard this regulation and the law.

Similarly the company will not be responsible for the actions of any member of staff whilst driving on company business and any law infringements including parking, speeding and use of a defective or uninsured vehicle will be the sole responsibility of the staff member.

Remember if you are banned from driving for any reason you could be jeopardising your employment with the company if you cannot perform the duties you were employed to undertake.

Health and safety in offices

- Electrical hazards
- Physical hazards

Skills 365

- Display screen equipment
- A safe workplace

Electrical hazards:

The potential risks associated with electrical equipment in use in offices and training rooms etc. should be appreciated. Electrical circuits should not be overloaded by the use of adaptors to serve a number of appliances. Independently fused, fixed multi-socket plug boards should be used instead, where appropriate.

Plugs must be correctly fused for the power rating of the appliance, and plug cables should be securely fixed by cable clamps. Amateur repairs on electrical equipment should on no account be attempted and only qualified electrical engineers should remove service panels from such equipment. Appliances should be switched off and unplugged after use and at night (unless the equipment concerned is designed to run continuously).

All items of portable electrical equipment must be regularly inspected and tested for electrical safety in order to comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations, 1989.

Physical hazards:

Physical hazards may be presented by some office machinery and equipment. All guards on guillotines, copiers, printing and other powered machinery, such as paper shredders, must be kept in place at all times when the equipment is in use. Great care should be taken to prevent long hair, ties and loose clothing becoming entangled in the moving parts of such machinery. Care should also be taken to prevent trailing wires, cables, etc., from presenting a tripping hazard. Kettles must

never be placed on the floor or in precarious positions on shelves or desks. People have been scalded by the contents of a precariously located kettle.

Warning signs will be placed by kettles used by visitors and learners advising the dangers of burns and scalding from hot water and steam but staff must ensure that risks associated with the use of a kettle etc for refreshments are minimised to a safe level.

Materials should not be stacked on the floor where people may fall over them. Filing cabinets can often cause injuries and they should be so positioned as to prevent people coming into contact with sharp edges, corners, etc. Lower drawers of cabinets should be sufficiently loaded to prevent toppling when an upper drawer is opened, and drawers should be closed immediately after use. Care must be taken, when lifting and carrying, not to attempt too heavy a load and not to carry a load which obscures forward vision. Tables and chairs, especially revolving chairs, should never be used to gain access to high shelving and shelves should not be overloaded, especially above head height. If access above head height is required, a proper set of steps or a library stool should be used.

Care should be exercised when using doors, which do not have a viewing panel, particularly if heavy objects, hot liquids etc., are being carried. Solid doors should be approached from the side away from the hinges, and personnel should never barge through doors or run in corridor areas.

Display Screen Equipment

- Introduction
- Workstation assessments
- The screen
- The keyboard and work surface
- Seating
- Work environment

Skills 365

- DSE Eye Tests
- Further information
- o Guidance leaflets
- o Concerns
- o Training

Introduction to display screen equipment

Display screen equipment (DSE), and particularly visual display units (VDUs), is now a commonplace feature of the office environment.

There are a number of hazards associated with the prolonged use of DSE and information on how to minimise these risks is outlined below.

Display screen equipment and other relevant work equipment, including desks, chairs and other associated furniture can and should be adjusted to the most comfortable position for each individual user.

In order to avoid discomfort from prolonged use of DSE equipment, users should:-

- assess their workstation
- raise any problems with their line manager in order that they may be resolved,
- make necessary adjustments to their workstation, and
- adopt good working practices

Workstation assessments:

Before beginning to work at a workstation, you should receive adequate instruction and training in the use of your own particular workstation equipment with particular emphasis placed on the health and safety aspects associated with its use.

Each workstation must be assessed and any problems resolved as soon as possible. You are encouraged to report any problems back to your supervisor for remedial action.

The screen:

Display screens should have easily read characters, and should be stable, with no visible flicker or swim. Screens should swivel and tilt easily, and you should have control of brightness and contrast. The screen should be free from reflective glare.

There is no evidence to suggest that display screens cause damage to the eyes or eyesight, or make existing eye defects worse. However, some people find reading from a VDU screen is tiring even when other precautions, such as preventing poor positioning with respect to overhead lighting and windows, resulting in glare, have been taken. If you are in any doubt about your eyesight you should have an eye test.

Studies by responsible expert bodies such as the National Radiological Protection Board in the United Kingdom indicate that radiation emission from VDUs is negligible, being very much less than that from natural environmental sources such as the sun. There is no reason to suspect that work with VDUs can affect the reproductive functions in either men or women. Talk to your doctor if you have any doubts or worries in this regard.

The keyboard and work surface:

The keyboard should be separate from the screen and moveable, for maximum operator control, and the work surface should be sufficiently large for a flexible arrangement of the components of the workstation, and should be of low reflectance. A suitable document holder should be provided, if required.

Seating

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The height of the chair and angle of the chair back need to be adjustable so that the whole design of the workstation is suited to the physique of the operator, so as to provide a comfortable working environment. A suitable footrest should be provided, if requested. Staff as part of their induction process should ensure that they are aware of correct seating postures when using VDU equipment and similarly ensure all learners are made aware of correct and safe procedures.

There is no doubt that ergonomic and visual fatigue problems can be aggravated by long periods of work. A transfer to other activities for around 10 minutes in every hour is generally regarded as a good way of avoiding such problems. Flexibility in the work regime is the key, taking into account the requirements of both the individual operator and the work in hand.

In the main centre all work station positions will be supplied with operator chairs which can be adjusted to individual learner needs. However in some satellite centres it is not practical to use operator chairs and learners will use fixed design chairs supplied by the centres. In these circumstances, the centre facilitator coordinator will advise each learner that they have not been provided with operator chairs and in accordance with our H&S policy the learner must stand and move about at least every 45 minutes or shorter times if they find they are becoming stiff or uncomfortable. The responsibility is on the facilitator to ensure this time table is strictly adhered to.

Work environment:

The work environment, in terms of space considerations, lighting, reflections and glare, noise, temperature and humidity, must be such that a comfortable workstation is provided, which is acceptable to the operator.

Software employed must be appropriate to the task, and adapted to the capabilities of the operator. Operators should never be subject to clandestine surveillance of work performance; any such monitoring must only be carried out after full consultation.

A safe workplace:

Common sense and basic good housekeeping are the predominant factors influencing the maintenance of high standards of health and safety in offices and staff should always be conscious of dangers to themselves and their colleagues, presented by their working environment and activities.

Any unsafe conditions, e.g. faulty fire doors, missing fire extinguishers, missing Fire Notices, defective equipment (particularly defective gas fires), poor lighting, damaged floor coverings, unsafe furniture and so on, should be reported at once to the Health and Safety Director so that remedial action can be taken.

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