DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

Contents

Introduction 1
Outline of the Display Screen Equipment Regulations (DSE) 2
The Workstation 3
Work Chair 4
Display Screen 5
Keyboard 6
DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

1. Introduction
This guidance is in addition to guidance notes 10a, b & c and will assist managers to meet their obligations under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations. It will assist managers to assess their staffs work stations to enable them to meet the requirements of the regulations. It will also assist in the planning and layout of work areas and the choice of appropriate equipment and furniture for use with display screens. There is also a brief outline of the Display Screen equipment Regulations.

2. Summary of Display Screen Equipment Regulations
The basic requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment Regulations) 1992 (DSER) are to provide and maintain an environment in which display screen equipment can be operated without risk to health. The employer is obliged, where display screen equipment is used by a worker for a significant period, to perform an analysis of the workstation, assess and reduce risks.

Such an analysis must look at the equipment, the furniture and the immediate working environment. This must be done in consultation with workers and/or their representatives. Any risks to health must be identified, evaluated and reduced to an acceptable level. Actions taken, and reasons why, must be reported to employees. Components which make up the workstation, such as desks, chairs, screens and keyboards, must meet certain minimum standards.

The regulations implement minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment. The regulations cover those who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. It also covers staff who work at home who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. Regulation 1 (2) (d) defines the employees who are covered as “users”. In University users are defined as those who perform any of the following tasks for daily, continuous spells of an hour or more:

- Using the MIS system
- Using the Library Cataloguing System
- Word-processing or Desk top publishing
- Data inputting

What has to be done to comply with the Regulations?
The general objectives are to:

- Analyses workstations assess and reduce risks, this involves the need to look at the whole workstation, including equipment, furniture and the work environment
- Consider the type of work being carried out
- Consider any special needs of individual staff (whose views may be sought as part of the assessment)
Where risks are identified steps must be taken to reduce them

- Ensure workstations meet minimum requirements to include, screens, keyboards, desks, chairs, the work environment and software
- Plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity
- On request arrange eye tests, and provide glasses if special ones are needed
- Provide health and safety training and information

3. The Workstation
The following should be taken into account when setting up a workstation:

The desk or work surface must be large enough to accommodate all the required equipment and to enable a flexible arrangement of the equipment upon it. Good ergonomic practice suggests that the depth should be at least 800mm (front to back) to house the average size display screen, where a larger screen is employed a larger desk would be appropriate.

It must be possible to place the keyboard directly in front of the screen, allowing a minimum of 150mm in front of the keyboard and the front edge of the desk and still maintain an adequate choice in viewing distance.

Avoid the rear of the monitor overhanging the rear of the desk, as this could create a safety hazard.

The surface width of the desk should be no less than 1200mm, with an optimum width of 1600mm.

The arrangement of articles on the desk top/worksurface should take into account the normal working area to avoid over stretching.

The height for a general purpose fixed-height desk for keyboard use should be between 660mm and 730mm. BS 7179 recommends a height of 720mm be used.

The desk surface should be constructed of a low-reflective material to prevent interference to vision.

Ideally display screens should be positioned at right angles to windows to minimise glare, and window blinds should be provided. To avoid reflections from the screen, where possible the desk should run parallel with, and between, rows of overhead lights.

There should be adequate space for the user to find a comfortable position.

4. Work Chair
The chair should be stable, have a swivel action and fitted with glides or castors for easy movement. The seat should be adjustable in height the back should be adjustable in both height and tilt.
A footrest should be made available were the user is unable to rest their feet flat on the floor (e.g. where work surfaces cannot be adjusted to the right height in relation to other components of the workstation). Footrest should not be used when they are not necessary as this can result in poor posture.

All major suppliers of office furniture will be able to meet these requirements.

5. Display Screen
The characters on the screen should be well-defined and clearly formed, of adequate size and with adequate spacing between the characters and lines.

The image on the screen should be stable, with no flickering.

The brightness and contrast should be easily adjustable by the user.

The screen must swivel and tilt.

The screen should be free of reflective glare and reflections liable to cause discomfort to the user.

6. Keyboard
The keyboard should be tiltable and separate from the screen.

There should be sufficient space in front of the keyboard to provide support for the hands and arms.

The surface should be a matt finish to avoid reflective glare. The symbols should be adequately contrasted and legible.

A document holder would be an advantage for work with hard copy. It should be positioned so that the document is at a height, visual plane and viewing distance similar to those of the screen.

A hand/wrist support placed between the front edge of the keyboard and the edge of the desk or worksurface may help to reduce fatigue while keying in, also a mouse mat incorporating a wrist support may be helpful.

Risk Assessment
An initial assessment of a workstation should be carried out by the line manager using the self assessment checklist ‘B’ which forms part of guidance note 10b.

Where safety of others is not a critical factor in the use of display screen equipment the assessment can be a judgement based on the responses to the checklist. Where particular problems are highlighted help and advice can be obtained from the University Health and Safety Advisor, who will carry out a more detailed assessment if required.