

# Safety in the use of Display Screen Equipment

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is generally safe, but if used incorrectly it can give rise to problems such as muscular strain injuries (in the neck, arms, hands and back), eye strain, headaches and general fatigue. The simple, but essential, steps given below should prevent such symptoms being experienced by your staff due to the use of DSE. You may find them useful as a safety check list.

**STEP 1** Carry out an assessment of all DSE and associated workstations. Ask your staff if they have experienced any problems when using DSE.

**STEP 2** Take steps to minimise any problems identified by the above assessment (see steps 3-9).

**STEP 3** Provide workstations (screens, keyboards, chairs etc.) which are fully adjustable and which provide sufficient space to allow staff to change position often.

**STEP 4** Provide additional accessories such as footrests, antiglare screens and document holders if necessary to minimise any problems experienced.

**STEP 5** Where possible, position DSE so as to avoid any glare or reflections on the screen (e.g. position at right angles to windows and between rows of fluorescent lights). Window blinds and/ or desktop lamps have often been used to reduce problems of glare.

**STEP 6** Organise work activities and schedules, to allow those staff who use DSE for prolonged periods to move away from the screen frequently (e.g. to do some photocopying or filing), or allow for sufficient breaks.

**STEP 7** Train all staff in the safe use of DSE, particularly in the proper adjustment of equipment and furniture and the need to take frequent breaks from the screen and to adjust their position often.

**STEP 8** Provide user friendly software and train staff in it's operation.

**STEP 9** Provide a healthy office environment with levels of ventilation and relative humidity that are comfortable and in which noise levels are minimised.

**STEP 10** Organise an eye examination and eyesight test at regular intervals for those DSE users who request such tests. You are only required to pay for spectacles if special ones are needed for this type of work and normal glasses cannot be used.

**Screen**  
Position at a comfortable angle and distance

Adjust brightness/contrast/distance/angle, if causing eye fatigue

Position at right angles to windows and to avoid glare from fluorescent lights

Keep clean

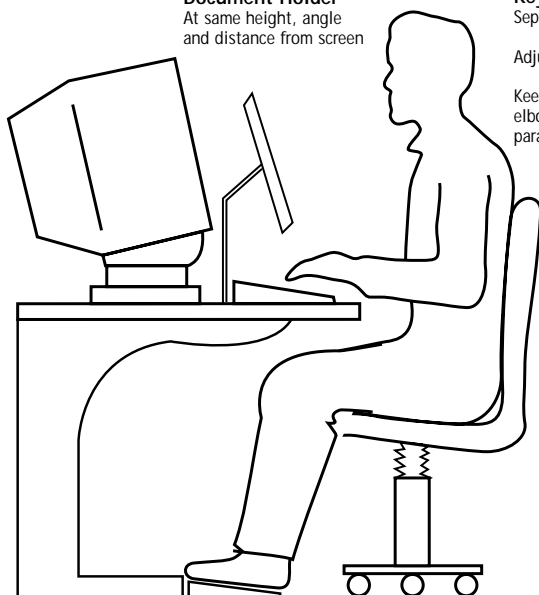
**Mouse**  
Position so it can be used with the wrist straight and so the forearm can be supported by the desk

**Desk**  
Large enough to allow you to change position

Sufficient leg room

Uncluttered

**Document Holder**  
At same height, angle and distance from screen



**Keyboard**  
Separate from screen

Adjustable tilt

Keep wrists straight, elbows at 90° and arms parallel to the floor

**Chair**  
Adjustable height and back rest

Good lumbar support

Adjust to allow feet on floor (or footrest); back straight, and arms to rest at right angle to the desk



■ For further information:

*VDUs: An Easy Guide to the Regulations*

HSG90, HSE Books

ISBN 0717607356

Safety Pays 