

## **Understanding DSE (display screen equipment) regulations**

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), it will generally be appropriate to classify the person concerned as a user or operator if they: (a) normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time; and (b) use DSE in this way more or less daily; and (c) have to transfer information quickly to or from the DSE; and also need to apply high levels of attention and concentration; or are highly dependent on DSE or have little choice about using it; or need special training or skills to use the DSE.

### **Employees –**

Employees often have autonomy to take breaks from screens; and they have a responsibility to do so, therefore avoiding creating a health problem

Homeworkers may encounter both the normal risks associated with DSE work and some potentially increased risks that may arise from social isolation, stress, lack of supervision, lack of employer commitment and difficulties in undertaking risk assessments.

A good solution is for the employer to train all employees to undertake their own risk assessments. This can be done by instruction in how to use an ergonomic checklist, and understanding about who has the responsibility for dealing with any risks found.

Employees should be encouraged to report early problems (see health note below)

### **Employers -**

Regulations state: Every employer shall perform a suitable and sufficient analysis of those workstations which –

(a) (regardless of who has provided them) are used for the purposes of his undertaking by users; or  
(b) have been provided by the employer and are used for the purposes of its undertaking,

for the purpose of assessing the health and safety risks to which those persons are exposed in consequence of that use.

The employer shall reduce the risks identified in consequence of an assessment to the lowest extent reasonably practicable.

### **Health /prevention**

The principal health risks associated with DSE work are;

- physical (musculoskeletal) problems
- visual fatigue
- mental stress

Risks to typical users should be low if the DSE Regulations are complied with and ergonomic principles are taken into account in the design, selection, installation and use of the equipment; the design of the workplace; and the organisation of the task.

**It is essential that companies work with employees to:**

- reduce risks of ill health, by complying with the DSE Regulations and guidance;
- encourage early reporting of symptoms;
- ensure cases of ill health are managed effectively;
- review risk assessments as and when necessary

**Return to work**

On return to work it will be necessary to carry out a risk assessment to identify any special medical requirements. This will ensure that it is safe for the employee return to work and allow for DSE to be adapted to help prevent the employee going off with same problem in the future.

It also may be necessary to refer to Occupational Health who will be able to advise an employee's suitability for DSE usage. An Ergonomic assessment, carried out by a specialist may also be needed to provide this support depending on the condition.