



BBC Studioworks

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

[Document subtitle]



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Risk Assessment: Display Screen Equipment

1 Guidance

DSE can cause problems if incorrectly used. Potential health problems such as stress and fatigue, headaches, eye strain, and work related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) – e.g. sore neck, shoulders, back, arms and wrists can arise because of how DSE workstations are used, rather than because of the workstations themselves. Comfort, support and variety are the keys to health and safety when using DSE.

DSE is used in a number of work activities: Offices, Receptions, CCTV in control rooms, data inputting etc.

Managers who have staff who use DSE for more than an hour each day need to make sure that those who use them have the information to avoid health problems through training, and information.

The training provided to users should include information on how and why to adjust their workstation, and how to control their workload to reduce the risks from the use of display screen equipment. Users will also need training in the software packages that they use to know how to use them efficiently e.g. short cut keys, software settings.

2 Regulations

Display screen equipment, process control screens, and similar display units are subject to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

3 DSE Assessment

BBC Studioworks will undertake DSE risk assessments for all members of staff utilising DSE. This will analyse workstations, and assess and reduce risks.

DSE Assessments should be undertaken by a competent manager with appropriate knowledge and training of DSE risk assessment and management.

The assessor should:

- Assess the whole workstation including equipment, furniture, and the work environment;
- Take into account the job being done;
- Consider any special needs of individual staff

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- Identify any risks and take steps to reduce them.
- Ensure workstations meet minimum requirements.
- Plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity.
- On request arrange eye tests, and provide spectacles if special ones are needed.
- Provide health and safety training and information.

Any actions identified in the assessment need to be carried out. A record of the assessment and any actions carried out need to be kept for at least 6 years, this will help to demonstrate that you have complied with the law, and you can respond to an inspection or claim. DSE Assessments need to be reviewed if the user develops a disability, if user becomes pregnant, before any new technology, equipment or software is introduced, if there is an office move or redesign of the area, layout or lighting, there is a change in the type of work or amount of time that user is using the equipment.

3.1 Work Load & Pattern

The work load and work pattern are also part of the assessment. It is essential that the user is able to organise their work so that they are able to take regular breaks away from the screen. For every hour of inputting at least 5 to 10 minutes breaks should be in the work pattern. This does not mean that users have to stop work every hour, on the hour, it means planning the work so that there are frequent breaks and doing other work, such as making telephone calls, doing paperwork etc, so that they are using different muscles and are not static. Movement is key, so light exercises should also be encouraged.

3.2 Working Environment

The working environment also needs to be part of the assessment – need to provide appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation. The user needs to be comfortable – the lighting needs to be appropriate for the tasks performed at the workstation and should not cause any reflections or glare; there shouldn't be any irritating noises or a noise level that prevents users talking at a reasonable level; ventilation should not make users feel stuffy or suffer from dry eyes.

3.3 Eye Tests

All DSE users are entitled to an appropriate eye and eyesight test. Eye sight tests need only be carried out every two years, unless symptoms occur or following recommendation from the optician or GP. The costs of eye sight tests should be covered by the employer. Where the eye examination shows that glasses are needed specifically for DSE work, the employer should contribute to the cost. It is only a small number of people who do need glasses specifically for the focal range when using DSE.

Encourage people to let you know if they have health problems, they believe may be caused by DSE – early intervention can save years of pain. Reassess the workstation and work pattern and if necessary, seek medical advice.

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3 Workstations

Workstations and the work carried out at them needs to be assessed to control the risks of postural problems, visual fatigue and mental stress and fatigue. The first step is to organise for all workstations to be assessed. The workstation layout and the equipment must be adjustable and suitable for those who use it and the work carried out. In order to minimise health risks, DSE workstations need to be set up correctly to enable best posture – the following elements should be employed:

Chair

- Adjust seat until arms are parallel to the floor and wrists are straight when fingers are on the keyboard.
- Knees at a right angle and feet supported so place a foot rest under feet if required.
- Adjust back-rest up or down until pad aligns with the hollow of the lower back.
- Pull back-rest in until it fits snugly into hollow in lower back.
- Make minor adjustments where necessary to ensure comfortable position for the individual.
- Chairs should be adjusted each time they are used.
- Avoid interference with back support e.g. coats on the backs of chairs

Screen

- The screen should be positioned directly in front of user. However, if touch typing the document holder can be in front.
- The average viewing distance is about arm's length away when sitting comfortably in the chair.
- Ideally the top edge of the screen should be level with the eyes.
- The angle of the screen should be adjusted to be at right angles to the eyes or which best avoids any glare and reflection on the screen.
- The brightness and contrast should be adjusted to suit the lighting conditions and the user at the time.
- The screen should be cleaned regularly.
- To minimise glare and reflection:
 - Have workstation at 90 degrees to window.
 - Use window blinds.
 - Surroundings should have a dull matt finish, watch out for glossy posters.
 - Use desk lights and reduce overhead lighting.
 - Reposition workstation in relation to overhead lighting.

Keyboard & Mouse

- The keyboard should be directly in front of user with forearms and wrists straight and elbows at a right angle.
- Enough space to rest arms.
- Mouse – should be positioned in a way which allows best positioning of wrist and arm – as close to the body as possible.
- Mouse – avoid over stretching.
- Use wrist rest.
- Where possible use keyboard short cuts rather than the mouse.

General equipment should be placed around the user in such a way as to reduce undue stretching/twisting and to:

- Allow free movement of legs under desk.
- Allow enough space to be able to change posture and position when desired.
- Allow easy access to and from workstation.

5 Laptops & Portable Equipment

Laptops and portable equipment are not adjustable so users should limit keyboard work to less than 30 minutes, then take a break of at least five minutes, preferably ten. They should get up from their seat, do a few exercises and walk about. Cushions may be used to provide additional support and to help back adopt its natural “S” shape when using chairs that are not adjustable. Crouching and peering at the screen should be avoided. The screen tilt facility and brightness/contrast controls should be used to help avoid poor posture. Users should look away from the screen occasionally to focus the eyes on distant objects, this will help prevent visual fatigue. The image on the screen should be clear, with adjustable contrast and brightness and a screen surface which is not reflective.

When using PDAs, inputting should be kept brief and intermittent, the way users’ input should be kept varied, – i.e. no overuse of particular fingers. Back, head and neck should not be hunched when inputting. Prolonged peering at a small screen may cause eye fatigue. Check that the characters on the screen are well-defined and easy to read, e.g. choose the right font size and keep the screen clean. Use exercises to relax eye muscles.

Unlike a computer, PDAs are not adaptable so it may encourage users to use an awkward hand movement or poor body posture. The function of PDA is to help access information and keep in touch, it should not be used for large amounts of inputting. Shoulders and neck should be kept relaxed and if possible lower arms and wrists should be supported and kept in a neutral position.

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When using the pen/stylus keep wrists straight – avoid flicking them. Similarly using just thumbs to input may lead to overuse of the muscles. Equipment should not be held tightly – if you are relaxed then you reduce the risks of pains and strains.



Appendix 1: Risk assessment Display Screen Equipment

The people that might be harmed: BBC Studioworks employees, contractors, public, artists

HAZARD	CONTROLS
<p>The workstation or machine design is unsuitable for the user</p> <p>The installation of workstations does not comply with the DSE Regulations</p> <p>Workstation equipment is not suitable for the task</p> <p>Workstation equipment is not properly adjusted to suit user</p> <p>Inappropriate introduction of new technology/equipment in existing environment</p> <p>Technology and software is unsuitable for the task</p> <p>Lack of user information, instruction and training</p> <p>The work area is overcrowded</p> <p>The working environment is too noisy and/or too hot</p> <p>The work pattern does not allow adequate breaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workstations and equipment are designed to suit the user and the task • Workstations can be adjusted to suit individual users • All users are trained in the safe use of the workstation. • All workstations are assessed for risks to health and safety and where appropriate, for compliance with the DSE Regulations. • Users of DSE have been identified. • Eyesight screening is offered to users. • Health surveillance is offered to appropriate groups. • Arrangements in place for on-going review and re-assessment of workstations. • Appropriate breaks may be taken