Display Screen Equipment Policy

These Regulations are sometimes known as the VDU or DSE Regulations.

The Regulations were brought into force by an EEC Directive, which seeks to promote the health of workers by reducing risks from using DSE, with the health problems which are associated with the use of DSE being:

Upper Limb Disorder, including pains in the Neck, Arms, Elbows, Wrists, Hands and Fingers

Temporary Eyestrain (but not eye damage) and headaches.

Fatigue and stress.

The causes may not always be obvious and may be a combination of factors.

It is useful to understand the meaning of certain words used by these Regulations.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

This covers any conventional (Cathode Ray Tube) and Liquid Crystal Displays that are used to display text, lines and graphics as their main function.

Equipment used mainly as television e.g. security monitors are not covered.

The regulations also apply to non- electronic systems such as microfiche.

There are specific exclusions, which are not covered by these Regulations such as:

Driver's cabs or machinery control cabs.
Screens that are on board a means of transport.
Screens that are mainly for public use e.g. cash dispensers and library terminals.
Calculators or cash registers which only have a small display window.
Typewriters, which only have a few lines of text.

Portable equipment not in prolonged use (Laptop computers).

User

A user is defined, under the Regulations, as someone who 'habitually uses display screen equipment for the purposes of an employer's undertaking as a significant part of their normal work'.

As a general rule, this means an employee who:

Uses DSE more or less continually during the working day; or for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time on a daily basis.

Has to transfer information quickly to or from the screen.

Regulation 2

The employer should analyses the workstation and subsequently reduce risks created by the workstation.

The reduction in the risk should be to the lowest extent reasonably practicable, with the assessment being reviewed when changes in the workstation occur or when the operation of the system changes.

All risks should be recorded unless they are identified as being insignificant and the assessment can be easily repeated.

It would be necessary to review all assessments if:

Hardware/software is modified or changed.
The workstation is modified.
The time spent using equipment increases.
Change in task, workstation relocated or the lighting modified.

Regulation 3

This Regulation identifies the elements of the workstation, which are required to be assessed and when the assessment should be undertaken.

The Regulations clarify the elements of the workstation that need to be assessed and are divided into three main topics

The Equipment.
The Environment.
The Interface.

The Equipment

The screen should meet minimum requirements for clarify and size of character and flicker, and there should be a brightness and contrast control.

The screen must be able to tilt and swivel and should be separate from other elements of the workstation. It is important to ensure the screen is free of glare at all times.

The Keyboard should tilt and be separate with support and the front for supporting the hands and the arms of the operator.

The keyboard should be matt finish and all the symbols legible.

The workstation should be large enough, with a stable adjustable document holder and the chair should be stable with a height and backrest adjustable.

If requested, a footrest should be made available.

The requirements of the workstation and chair are only necessary if the equipment is present.

The Environment

Various factors are required to be determined such as:

- Space – There should be sufficient space for the operator to move or change position and store documents.
- Lighting – This should be suitable and sufficient to reduce glare and reflections.
- Noise – Assess ancillary equipment to ensure no disturbance.
- Heat – Excess heat should not be produced by ancillary equipment.
- Humidity – A suitable and adequate level should be maintained.

The Interface

The software should be suitable for the task, easy to use with no quantitative or qualitative checking without the operator's knowledge.

The system should provide suitable feedback on performance to operators/users, with this information being of an acceptable format.

Eye Tests

Regulations 5 lays down requirements for eyesight tests for present and future users of DSE.

Present users shall be provided, on request, with appropriate eye tests, it is also advisable that future users are tested before they become users.

Repeat testing is to be at the discretion of the competent person conducting the test: however, there is no compulsion on employees to undergo tests against their will.

Where the user experiences difficulties with DSE the employer should provide eye/eyesight tests as soon as possible.

The employer will be required to meet the cost of providing these tests and any special corrective appliance necessary.

Regulations 6 & 7

These Regulations identify the need for employees to be trained in the safe use of the equipment and be informed of the risks, the result of risk assessment, activity breaks and eyesight tests.