

Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedure

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1. Work Station Assessment

Dorset Council has a legal duty to minimise the risks to habitual computer users by ensuring that workstations are set up correctly, jobs are well designed, and the user knows how to work safely. Every member of staff who uses a computer to carry out their work must have their workstation assessed. Use our online self-assessment and guidance to find out more.

The full assessment requirements of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 apply if you are an employee working from a fixed base office, flexible workplaces or from home and habitually use a computer for a significant part of your normal work.

Other members of staff, who use computers only occasionally, are not covered by the full requirements of the Regulation. However, employers have general duties to ensure staff are protected and this would extend to the provision and/or advice on an appropriately safe workstation.

If you are a new member of staff who uses a computer or have had a recent office move or change in working arrangements (flexible workplaces) or have never taken part in a workstation assessment. Please access your existing intranet information and follow the link to the Work Station Assessment Form.

If you would like further advice on the requirement to complete the assessment form or have any general questions on computer usage, please contact the Health and Safety Team on the details below.

Healthandsafety@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Or by calling

01305 224296

2. Completing the Work Station Assessment Form

[Work Station Assessment Form](#)

3. Guidance on completing the work station assessment

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 came into effect from January 1993. The regulations require employers to minimise the risks in computer work by ensuring that workplaces and tasks are well designed.

The assessment requirements of the regulations apply if you are an employee working in an office, flexibly or at home, and habitually using a computer for a significant part of your normal work.

4. Self-assessment

An electronic self-assessment checklist can be accessed via the existing link on the DCC SharePoint intranet or externally for school based staff, which will help a member of staff work through the issues related to the safe use of computers and workstations. Specific questions in the self-assessment may trigger further advice and guidance from the Health and Safety Team on receipt of an electronic version sent to them automatically.

For staff from the other sovereign authorities please refer back to your existing intranet for further guidance about how you can complete a workstation assessment. Alternatively contact the Health and Safety for further advice and guidance.

It is hoped that this will improve the assessment process and increase accessibility for those members of staff who are working flexibly.

Other members of staff, who use computers only occasionally, are not covered by the full requirements in the regulations, however, employers still have general duties to protect them under health and safety at work legislation and this would extend to the provision and/or advice on an appropriate safe workstation.

5. Good practice guidelines

Please follow the guidelines below, which will minimise any risk, act as a reminder of good practice and enable sensible measures to be taken.

Laptops and other portables have to be compact and easy to carry. The resulting design features, like small keyboards, can make prolonged use uncomfortable, unless steps are taken to avoid problems, for example by using a docking station.

It is best to avoid using a laptop/portable on its own if full-sized equipment is available. Like other computer users, people who habitually use a laptop/portable should be trained how to minimise risks. This includes sitting comfortably, angling the screen so it can be seen clearly with minimal reflections, and taking frequent breaks if work is prolonged. Wherever possible, laptops/portables should be placed on a firm surface at the right height for using the keyboard safely. It is not recommended to use a laptop in a position where your posture is compromised such as in a car or resting on your knees.

6. What can I do to help myself?

Make full use of the equipment provided, and adjust it to get the best from it to avoid potential health Problems

Here are some practical tips:

- Getting comfortable
- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work; as a broad guide,
- your forearms should be horizontal when your hands are placed on the keyboard and your eyes the
- same height as the top of the VDU screen if you are a touch typist; if you look at your keys, the • screen should be lower
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need
- A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as • boxes or equipment
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees - a footrest • may be helpful
- Ensure there is enough space in your work area to change position and vary movement

Keying in

- A separate keyboard is recommended when using a laptop away from a docking station, especially • for long periods of time
- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position - a space in front of the keyboard is sometimes
- helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying; keep a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch
- your fingers - good keyboard technique is important

Using a mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight; sit upright and close
- to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched; move the keyboard out of the • way if it is not being used
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly

- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard
- An external mouse is recommended when using a laptop to avoid excessive use of trackpoints (nipples) as input devices

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room
- The screen should be free from glare and reflections
- Make sure the screen surface is clean
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position; select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on blue background, or vice versa)
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move; if they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods: make sure you change your position as often as is practicable - some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation)
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, for example to do filing or photocopying - make use of them; if there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks; frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones

6. Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions relating to the online workstation assessment.

1. Why do I have to complete a workstation assessment?

Dorset Council has a legal duty to minimise the risks to habitual computer users by ensuring that workstations are set up correctly, jobs are well designed and the user knows how to work safely.

2. When do I need to complete the online questionnaire?

- If you are a new member of staff
- If you are experiencing health problems you feel are caused by computer use
- If you haven't had a workstation assessment in the last two years
- If you have moved office or changed workstation
- If you are working in a flexible workplace or work from home

2. Is this form easy to use?

Throughout the online assessment advice/tips will be given to help you complete the form and enable you to adjust your workstation if necessary.

3. What will happen once I have completed the form?

If all your answers conform to the requirements of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 no further action will be required. You will be requested to print a hard copy of your assessment and keep it in a safe place. The Health and Safety Team will automatically be sent a copy of your assessment for information only (user of SharePoint intranet only at the moment).

If your answers show that you are experiencing problems which may be caused by computer use (and you are unable to rectify them yourself) the system will automatically send a summary of your answers to the Health and Safety Team for action, and a copy to your line manager for information (users of SharePoint only at the moment).

4. How will the Health and Safety Team be involved?

A member of the Health and Safety Team may make contact with you dependent on your summary of answers and advise you of the most appropriate way forward. This may involve a visit from a member of the team.

5. If recommendations are made for change and/or equipment, who organises this?

It is the responsibility of your line manager to action any recommendations made by the Health and Safety Team.

7. Access to Work

Access to Work (AtW) is part of DirectGov and provides advice and practical support to disabled people and their employers to help overcome work-related obstacles resulting from disability or ill health.

Further advice around AtW can be found on your existing intranet or by contact Healthandsafety@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk