

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## Health & Safety Display Screen Equipment Guidance

**Category:** staff and volunteers



SoLO  
Life  
Opportunities

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### Introduction

The current law regarding Health & Safety introduced in 1974 set down the principles of legal protection against unsafe and unhealthy working practices. The requirements cover all who are involved in working activities.

The way in which these principles are applied is through the passing of detailed regulations which are backed by Approved Codes of Practice and guidance on how these legal principles can be met effectively. The process is carried out in Europe as well as the UK.

In 1992 six sets of regulations were passed. These covered the fundamentals of Health and Safety at Work. Three of those sets of regulations govern very specifically the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE). These are:

- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations

### Policy Statement

There follows a statement of the principles of the law applying to the use of Display Screen Equipment and guidance on what SoLO Life Opportunities must do to comply with the regulations.

# Health and Safety and Information Technology

## Employer's Obligations

1. the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 require SoLO to assess **workstations** of employees who are **users** of **DSE** as a significant part of their normal work. These assessments will show if action is needed to meet the standards set out in the Regulations. Part of the regulations requires procedures to be monitored and for planned re-assessments to be carried out to ensure that requirements continue to be met.
2. The overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to the Regulations rests with the CEO, operating on behalf of the Trustees.
3. The person with specific delegated responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Regulations is Business Support Manager.

## Employees' Duties

1. Following guidance entitled "Working Safely with VDUs" will help protect staff who use Display Screen Equipment. It is equally important to bring defects to the attention of the Health & Safety Officer as these could adversely affect user health and safety.
2. By following instructions and reporting defects, staff will meet their duty both to protect their own health and safety and to co-operate with SoLO in meeting its health and safety at work obligations.

## The Regulations and how they affect you

### 1. Who is affected?

All workers who habitually use Display Screen Equipment for a significant part of their normal work. Employees required to use a workstation at home are also covered.

### 2. Definitions

**Workstation**, **user** and **DSE** have specific meanings under the regulations:

## **Workstation**

- The Display Screen Equipment and the means to interact with it, e.g. keyboard, mouse
- Any optional accessories e.g. speakers, glare screens
- Disk drives, modems, printers or other peripherals
- Chairs, desk, telephones, document holders etc
- The immediate work environment

## **Display Screen Equipment**

This includes conventional television type screens and liquid crystal screens (laptops) which are used to display words, figures, graphs, line drawings etc. It does not cover equipment whose main use is to show television, film or video pictures.

## **User**

The regulations cover all staff who habitually use DSE. They do not have to have exclusive use of a particular piece of equipment. If the answer to most of the following questions is “yes”, then that person is a user:

- Is the individual dependent on the DSE to do the job?
- Is the only option to use DSE?
- Does the individual need specific training or skills to use the equipment?
- Does the individual use the equipment in spells lasting more than an hour?
- Does the individual use the equipment more or less daily?
- Is fast transfer of information using DSE important?
- Does the equipment require high levels of concentration to avoid job related errors?

## **3. What does SoLO have to do to comply?**

### ***Analyse workstations of staff covered by the Regulations and assess and reduce risks***

This will include looking at the hardware, the environment and factors specific to the individuals using the equipment. The views of the users must be sought as part of the assessment. Where risks are identified, SoLO have to take steps to reduce them.

### ***Ensure workstations meet minimum requirements***

These are specified in a schedule to the regulations and cover both equipment and the environment in which it is used. A form used to complete the assessment referred to above includes questions designed to ensure minimum requirements are met.

### ***Plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity***

The length or number of these is not specified precisely in the Regulations, as the need for breaks depends how intensely and for how long the employee has been using DSE. Short, frequent breaks are better than longer, less frequent ones, and ideally the individual should have some discretion over when they are taken. Best practice advises that users should spend no more than 50 minutes in any one hour at a screen. The break would normally be another type of work activity, e.g. filing, photocopying, reading a document, taking or making a telephone call, talking with a colleague.

***On request, agree to fund eye and eyesight tests and provide spectacles if special ones are needed***

Employees who are covered, or are about to be covered, by the Regulations can ask their employer to provide and pay for an eye and eyesight test by an optometrist or doctor. These employees are also entitled to further tests at regular intervals. It is recommended that such tests should be carried out every two years. If in the meantime an individual has visual problems which may be related to work with DSE, the employer is required to fund another test on request. The employee should specify to the optometrist that the test is related to DSE use. Employees are not obliged to undergo a test.

Should the eyesight test indicate that the employee requires spectacles specifically and solely for using Display Screen Equipment, the employer is required to fund the cost of a basic pair, including frames and lenses, but excluding any special coatings or designer feature costs. Should the eye test identify other sight defects which need rectifying through the wearing of spectacles, then the employer is not required to fund the cost.

***Provide health and safety training***

This is to ensure that employees can use all aspects of their workstation equipment safely and know how to make the best use of it to avoid health problems, e.g. adjustment of chairs.

***Provide information***

This should include what the employer has done to comply with the regulations, such as action taken to reduce risks and arrangements for breaks.

## **Implementation**

SoLO's Health & Safety Policy references "The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992" which require the organisation to assess the degree of risk in using DSE at a workstation and to take appropriate action to deal with the risk identified, in order to achieve this, the following steps will be undertaken:

- An individual assessment will be made for each user at a workstation
- Controls identified through that assessment to be put into practice
- Health surveillance to be provided to encourage DSE users to go through self checks and eye tests on a regular basis and to monitor use to ensure appropriate breaks are taken
- Where situations are not straightforward, for example where staff with disabilities have use of DSE, appropriate guidance will be offered
- Information about current legislation will be retained in the office and users will be provided with information and practical guidance to minimise health risks
- Where workstations are used by more than one member of staff or volunteer, systems will be put in place to ensure each user co-operates with the needs of others
- Appropriate training will be provided as required

- Temporary workers, including students on work placements, will be given information on health and safety regarding the use of DSE relevant to their situation

Linked with the following policies:

- Health & Safety

Additional guidance from <http://www.healthycomputing.com>

Booklet: Working Safely with VDUs