

LAPTOP HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

GENERAL STATEMENT

It is our policy to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, that laptop computers do not create health and safety hazards for users.

LEGAL POSITION

As a responsible employer, we recognise our duties under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended). Therefore, we have introduced a policy that applies to all users of laptop computers within the company. It should be read in conjunction with the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The smaller size and design of laptop computers mean that users can experience discomfort if the laptop is used for prolonged periods. This is because the smaller screen and keyboard encourages users to bend over, causing shoulder and neck problems.

Laptops, when in use for prolonged periods, fall within the requirements of Schedule 1 of the DSE Regulations. It is not possible to meet these requirements unless a laptop is supplemented by additional desktop equipment.

As a result, it is Company policy that:

- where a laptop is used at the employee's permanent base location, the workstation will be subject to a display screen assessment in the usual way
- those who use a laptop as their primary computer will be supplied at their desk with a separate keyboard and mouse. In addition, depending on the outcome of the DSE assessment, they will be supplied either with a screen raiser so as to use the laptop screen at the correct height, or with a completely separate screen with height adjustment. Suitable means of connecting the separate devices will be provided, including a docking station where justified for operational reasons
- employees are required to use the separate keyboard, mouse and where applicable, screen, whenever they are at their base location
- where an employee experiences discomfort in carrying the laptop, the company will seek to resolve the problem in the most appropriate way, e.g. by providing a smaller laptop, a backpack style bag or a wheeled bag
- employees who regularly use their laptop away from the base location will receive instruction in safe ergonomics when using computers in general, as well as drawing their attention to the guidelines below.

GUIDELINES FOR USERS

Employees are advised to apply the following guidelines:

- wherever possible, keep the use of laptops in stationary cars to a minimum. This is to prevent the additional stress on the spine and the increased likelihood of injury that could arise from unsuitable seating and limited space. When using a laptop in a car it is better to move into the passenger seat so as to have more space.
- don't overload your laptop bag. Try to carry documents electronically wherever practicable.
- be security aware. Consider the risk of theft before using the laptop in public spaces. Don't leave the laptop in a car boot overnight. Don't keep confidential information on your laptop unless you have permission to do so (in which case we may require you to use encryption software).
- wherever possible, the laptop should be positioned on a firm surface, at normal desk height and used with a chair of appropriate height.
- you are advised to angle the computer screen to minimise reflections.
- ensure that you have enough space in front of the laptop to rest your wrists and forearms whilst working.
- take regular breaks, or changes of activity - at least five minutes in every hour, and more frequently if you're using the laptop on its own, i.e. no separate keyboard, mouse or screen.
- if any discomfort is experienced whilst using or carrying a laptop, please report it to your manager.

I have read and understood this policy and guidelines.

Name (print):

Signed:

Date: