

Task 17 Health and Safety

You must show that you understand that whilst working with computers there are rules that must be followed and a safe environment must be provided by the organisation that you work for.

The following notes will help you and you must also talk about the environment that you work in at school and how this abides by the Health and Safety act

European regulations exist to protect the health and safety of employees who use computers for a considerable part of their working day.

Seating - Chairs with adjustable height and backrest are recommended. When seated correctly, the lower arms and thighs should be in a roughly horizontal position while working at the keyboard.

Worktops - A fixed height between 660-730mm is required (720mm is recommended). A worktop depth of 760-840 mm is required to give the user sufficient distance from the screen while working. Matt worktops in a cream or beige colour are recommended in order to reduce glare.

Lighting - Windows should be fitted with non-reflective blinds, preferably beige in colour. Consideration should be given to positioning of the screen away from light reflection and glare. The optimum position is at right angles to the source of natural light.

Screens - All new screens must be fitted with tilt and swivel stands. Sufficient room is needed for the screen to be moved back and forward. Ideally, the top of the screen should be at eye level.

Power supply - Leads should preferably be in trunking above the height of the worktops or be safely tied. An adequate number of supply sockets should be provided to eliminate the need for trailing wires. It is safer to switch the equipment off at the wall socket or room master switch rather than 'find' the switches at the rear of the machines. Mains plugs and leads must be checked for safety once a year.

Fire precautions - A fire extinguisher suitable for electrical fires (such as carbon dioxide) must be provided in all computer rooms. The location of the nearest fire exit must be notified near the door in each room.

Repetitive Strain Injury - This may be caused by repetitive finger movements over very long periods of time. It can become quite serious for people employed solely as keyboard operators. In order to reduce muscle fatigue and strain, users should be encouraged to get up and move around at reasonably frequent intervals, for example to collect equipment, and to do other forms of work.

Eye Strain - In order to reduce eyestrain, users should be encouraged to look away from the screen and focus on a distant object from time to time - this will relax their eye muscles. The wearing of spectacles also helps prevent possible soreness caused by the bombardment of ionised dust particles from the screen.