



# OFFICE SAFETY POLICY

OSBT SP-016-00

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EMPLOYEE EDUCATION 2019



# OFFICE SAFETY

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- **Purpose**

- Ensure that potential office hazards within our facility(s) are eliminated.
- To address comprehensively the issues of evaluating and identifying potential office hazards, providing written procedures, and communicating information concerning these hazards to employees, and mitigating factors adversely effecting Office Safety.

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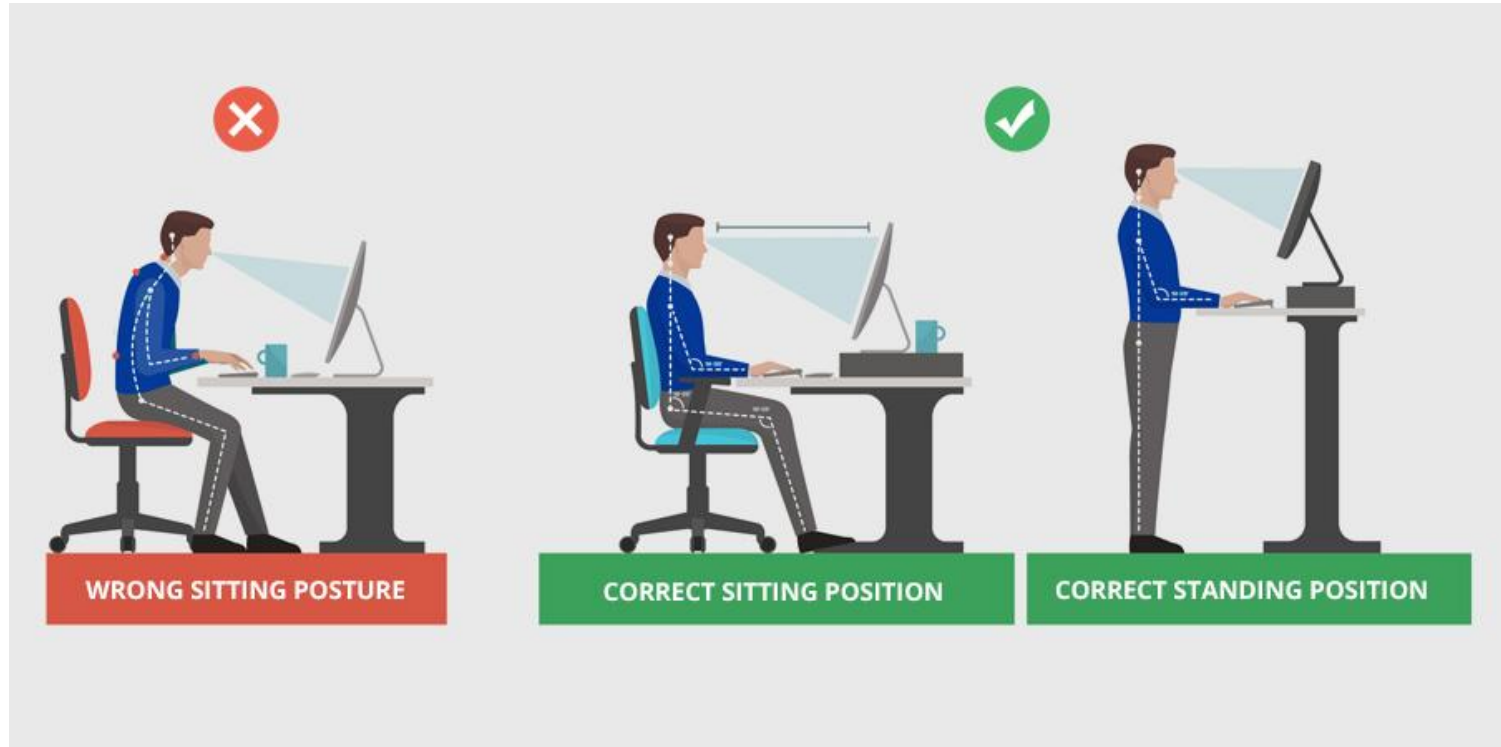
- **Responsibilities:**

- **Managers/Supervisors**

- Are responsible for the safe condition of all office areas within the company.
    - Supervisors will ensure that proper safety conditions exist in each office

- **Employees**

- OSBT Employees will implement office safety through the use of this document.
    - To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs safely.



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## Office Ergonomics

- Ergonomic improvements can dramatically improve worker safety and productivity. Employees are most likely to work efficiently and accurately when they do not have to strain. Supervisors should be given adequate training in recognition and control of ergonomic improvements.

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- Supervisors should:
  - Know the symptoms of Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD).
  - Be able to recognize when the stress involved in a particular job have the potential for contributing to a CTD.
  - Make sure employees are working in the best way possible.
- Cumulative trauma disorders.
  - The most common CTDs are tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), and lower back problems.

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- **Tendinitis** is an inflammation of a tendon that can occur at or near any joint.
  - Tendinitis associated with office work is most likely to occur at the wrist because of the stresses that can be involved in typing or filing.
- **Lower back strain** can be caused by too low of work surfaces, improper lifting techniques, improper seating or a combination of factors and poor workstation design.
- **Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS)** is caused by pressure on the median nerve in the wrist.
  - This nerve controls feeling and movement in the thumb and first three fingers.
  - CTS symptoms include numbness, pain, difficulty in holding objects, and restricted movement in the thumb and first three fingers.
  - Data entry is probably the biggest contributor to CTS.
    - With the fingers resting on the home keys of the keyboard, and shoulders relaxed, the employee's wrists and forearms should be in a straight line and more or less parallel to the floor.
    - If they are not, attempt the following adjustments:

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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- **Sitting:**
  - Improper sitting can cause fatigue and tension in the back, neck, or shoulders.
  - The following adjustments will be helpful:
    - Adjust the chair so that the feet are flat on the floor with no pressure on the back of the legs.
    - Adjust the back of the chair so that adequate support to the back is provided.
    - Adjust the chair height.
    - Lower the work surface.
    - Attach a keyboard drawer under desktops having an inappropriate height for keying information.
    - Place the keyboard on a moveable arm attached to the desk.

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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- **Telephone Communications**

- Most jobs that depend on telephone communication for data entry provide headsets that leave the employee's hands free and their shoulders relaxed.
- When people grip a telephone handset between the ear and shoulder, they are straining shoulder and neck muscles.
- In addition, their hands are probably being forced into an awkward position for typing.

- **Multiple Monitors**

- **Primary monitors** – monitors requiring viewing for a significant proportion of the working day and requiring extended periods of sustained viewing.
- **Secondary monitors** – monitors requiring viewing for a limited proportion of the day (<20% of overall viewing) and not requiring periods of sustained viewing (<5 minutes).
- **Tertiary monitors** – monitors requiring viewing for only very short periods (<5% of overall monitoring viewing) and only requiring very short periods of sustained viewing (<30 seconds).

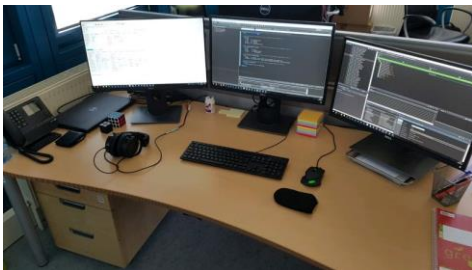


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- **Multiple Monitors – General Recommendations**

- Monitors should be positioned so that the top of each screen is at eye level (this is likely to require elevating the monitor above desk level).
- If different size monitors are used the center of each screen should be positioned at the same height.
- It is preferable to have larger screens to the center of any configuration
- Monitors should be positioned so that each monitor is at arm's length distance.
- Monitors should be positioned so that a slight arc is formed with the monitors to ensure the 'arm's length' distance is present across the span of monitors.
- Any gap should be minimized between monitors.
- Each screen should be tilted up slightly, approximately 15°.
- User should ensure that comparable levels of brightness, contrast and font size exist with each monitor.
- The user is centrally positioned between both monitors with body, chair and keyboard.
- That commonly viewed workload is spread evenly across central monitors.



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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Position materials and workstations so employees can reach the work comfortably, without stretching or straining.
- Employees who spend most of the day sitting should have good back support.
- Minimize the amount of force required to do the job. If employees have to lift, make sure they do it in the best way possible.
- Locate materials to reduce the amount of reach required as well as the distance traveled.
- Break periods
  - Be sure employees take advantage of scheduled breaks to relax muscles and tendons.
  - If the job has a high rate of repetition, take whatever other measures you can to reduce the risks for cumulative trauma disorders.
  - The employees should be encouraged to take regular breaks and exercise on a regular basis to increase circulation.

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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- **Seat height**
  - Improper sitting height requires employees to reach farther than necessary during the course of the workday.
  - The seat height should be adjusted so that writing does not require them to round their shoulders.
- **Seat length**
  - Employees can also develop leg and back problems from sitting too long in a chair that is too deep for them.
  - When they are sitting so they have good back support and their feet are supported, the edge of the chair should be at least a couple of inches back from the knees.

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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Arm support
  - A support for the arms can help reduce fatigue, both in the shoulders and the back.
  - It bears the weight of the arms and much of the upper body weight.
  - Armrests on a chair should be padded and they should be short enough so the employee will not have to stretch to reach the work.
  - If employees use the edge of the desk for an arm support, it should be rounded to reduce pressure on the arms.
  - Remember, that kind of pressure can contribute to problems with the nerve that runs past the elbow.



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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Foot support
  - Inadequate support for the feet can result in reduced circulation to the lower legs and feet.
  - Because many people relieve the pressure on their legs by leaning forward, this leaves them without any support to the back.
  - Modern footrests, properly adjusted to relieve pressure points usually will solve the problem.
  - Adjusting the seat height will also help.

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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Office Noise Abatement
  - High levels of noise such as that from computer printers, large copy machines, and other equipment found in office environments can prove damaging to hearing as well as add stress to the work environment.
  - The company will conduct sound level surveys as needed to determine if the occupational noise exposure exceeds the permissible noise exposure of the [Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 1910.95](#).

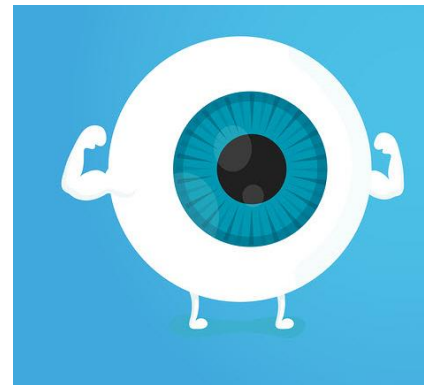


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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Lighting Criteria
  - Eye strain is a traditional health hazard of offices.
  - The role of proper lighting is to provide a safe, comfortable, and efficient visual environment.



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## Risk Reduction Techniques

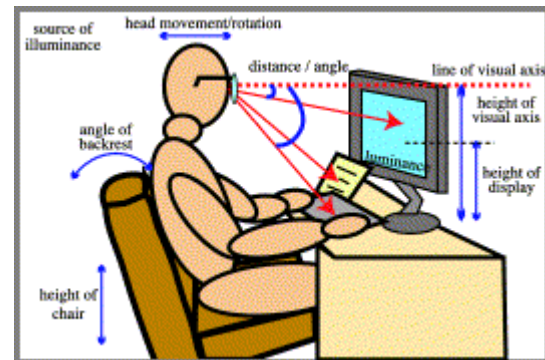
- Eye Strain
  - Eye strain can also be a problem.
  - Adjusting the screen for the minimum amount of glare and best contrast will reduce the amount of eyestrain our employees' experience.
- Monitor/VDT problems
  - Many people suffer from neck and shoulder problems because they spend hours working from a computer monitor or visual display terminal (VDT) that is not in the best position for them.
  - Correct placement of the VDT can relieve stress on the neck and shoulders.



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## Risk Reduction Techniques

- Monitor position
  - Employees should be able to read the screen with head in a neutral position and facing forward.
  - In order to do that, the monitor should be in front of them rather than to the side, and it should be at about eye level or a little lower.
  - For employees who wear bifocals, the monitor should be positioned low enough for them to be able to read the screen without tilting their heads back.
- Distance
  - The distance the monitor is from them is also important.
    - They should be able to read it easily without leaning forward or back in order to focus.
    - It should be arms' length plus two to three inches.





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## Recordkeeping

- The company will provide training for each employee using Office Ergonomics.
  - The program will enable each employee to recognize hazards related to Office Ergonomics and to use proper procedures to minimize these hazards.
- Field Service Techs report unsafe conditions to the Command & Control in their Exit Interview and/or their assigned PC/PM.
- Local Houston Branch employees report unsafe conditions to their Supervisor.

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## Regular Inspections:

- Fire Safety Equipment
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Mobility Impaired List
- Electrical Hazards
- Exits, Aisles, and Floors
- Office Equipment and Duplicating Machines
- Bookcases, Shelves, and Cabinets
- Stairwells, Halls, and Ramps



# THANK YOU!

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Thank you for completing Office Safety!  
Complete the [Office Safety quiz](#) to receive credit for this module.

Have questions?  
Contact [HSSE@osbt.com](mailto:HSSE@osbt.com)