

TOP 10 TIPS FOR SAFE WORKING FROM HOME DURING CV-19

Many employers have had to commence working from home for a large employee population that previously rarely did so at short notice. Working from home presents challenges and clearly it is not practicable to carry out detailed home based assessments whilst maintaining social distancing. Now that employers have largely overcome the technical and logistical challenges in terms of equipment and IT infrastructure this presents a good opportunity for them to put their house in order in terms of safe working practices. HSE's advice emphasises that for temporary home working a formal DSE assessment is not required but would be for permanent arrangements. However employers should still identify the risks associated with working from home and document the control measures that it is reasonably practicable to implement. We have prepared the below tips based on recommendations in HSE publications so that employees complying with Public Health England guidance can minimise risks to their health from home working until longer term control measures can be implemented. Employers should be mindful of the need to revise their risk assessments and to carry out DSE assessments in the future, particularly if home working of some form becomes a permanent or long term measure, even if this is done on a partial or flexible basis.

1

GETTING STARTED

If possible, employees should use an adjustable chair and a desk at home. If possible they should connect their laptop to an external monitor, keyboard and mouse to facilitate better seating and posture.

2

EMPLOYEES' IMMEDIATE SPACE

Employees should keep their work area tidy and free from obstructions, particularly tripping hazards on the floor. Employees should ensure they have adequate lighting in the location they choose to work.

3

ARE EMPLOYEES SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Employees should be advised to sit comfortably with their back and arms properly supported and should avoid long periods in awkward, static, poses. They should change position regularly.

4

SCREEN SET-UP

Employees should position or angle their screen so it can be easily viewed and avoid glare by positioning the screen appropriately and by adjusting curtains or blinds.

5

AVOID AWKWARD MOVEMENTS

Employees should be advised to clear a suitable space to avoid awkward movements to access necessary work materials, and should continue to follow best practice – for example in relation to manual handling.

6

SAFETY HAZARDS

Employees should be advised to be mindful of safety risks to others in their home – for example trailing cables should be tucked under furniture and employees should position themselves to minimise the risks posed by cables.

7

TAKE BREAKS REGULARLY

Employees should be encouraged to take regular breaks (at least 5 minutes in every hour) including stretching – shorter, more frequent breaks are best.

8

STAY IN TOUCH

It is important that staff are in regular contact with colleagues and keep their mobile to hand in case of emergencies.

9

WELLBEING

It is important that employers consider the mental health of their employees and that they have the support of their colleagues if they need it.

10

ENVIRONMENT

If possible, employees should create a separate area for work to create distance at the end of the day, and store documents and work equipment securely.

Employees should be advised to raise specific health and safety concerns when working from home with their manager or HR so they can assist to resolve the issue. Employers should also encourage employees to report any accidents or incidents in the normal way so that the employer knows of any hazards staff are encountering and any injuries they have sustained.