

## HACSU HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE

Your elected Health and Safety Representative is vital to your Health and Safety in the workplace - Be sure you know who they are and how to contact them (September 2018)

### Office job design and work environment

Good job and work environment design relies on matching the work and environment to individuals needs, capacities and limitations. Your job should have:

- Task variety – the physical and mental workload should vary throughout the day and include a range of postures
- Limitations on highly repetitive tasks – no more than 2 hours of repetitive keying at a time
- Limitations on extended standing or sitting – again no more than 2 hours for a session
- Limitations on extended high levels of concentration – no more than 2 hours at a time
- Autonomy – you should have some control over when, how and how often you perform any of the tasks in your job

### Reception or counter work

These office spaces must be fit for purpose, designed to ensure your safety with physical barriers, safety glass and sometimes duress alarms and other security devices. You should be adequately trained in the systems of work and the security procedures that are applicable in any given circumstance. Where incidents involving abuse and/or threats to security from the public or clients occur, debriefing must be available.

### Lighting

Lighting should be adequate for the tasks you do. You need to be able to control incoming light and any glare, reflections, flicker or shadows that may interfere with your work.

### Noise

There should not be excessive loud, distracting or disruptive noises in your office workspace. You should be able to clearly hear others in your workplace without them needing to be closer than a meter from you. There needs also to be suitable privacy for your phone calls.

### Air

Your office space should have a steady supply of clean fresh air, without draughts. A comfortable air temperature should be maintained without significant hot or cold fluctuations.

### Workstations

Chairs, desks and benches and all data input devices (keyboard, mouse) should be designed to reduce risks from awkward postures and movements. Any risks from other equipment in the working space should be assessed and controlled. There should be adequate desk or bench space for items such as phones, laptops and electronic diaries, forearm rests, document holders, staplers, etc.

### Office layout

Your office should be designed for the work you do, with appropriate personal and shared spaces, partitions and walkways.

### Office Storage

Storage in your office space should be designed to control risks from slips and trips and manual handling. Shelving and filing space must be adequate and at appropriate working heights with the most often accessed items positioned at comfortable lifting and lowering heights. Clear walkway access should be maintained.

## HACSU HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE

Your elected Health and Safety Representative is vital to your Health and Safety in the workplace - Be sure you know who they are and how to contact them (September 2018)

### Printing and Copying

Noise and fumes from office machinery must be adequately controlled. Particularly noisy equipment and frequently used equipment should be located in suitably ventilated and isolated areas.

### Electrical hazards

All electrical equipment in your office should be tested and tagged and suitably maintained.

### Manual handling tasks

You should be able to safely manage any manual handling tasks involved in your office work. Tasks should not involve:

- Repetitive or sustained force, awkward posture or movement
- Application of high force
- Handling of loads which are unstable, unbalanced or difficult to grasp or hold

### Social and Organisational working environment

Your working environment needs to be healthy and safe and as free as is reasonably possible from risks to your wellbeing from:

- Conflicting demands and inconsistent expectations
- Bullying (such as intentionally withholding information, exclusion or isolation, harassment, unreasonable threats of dismissal)
- Occupational violence (such as physical assault or threat, indecent physical contact, pushing, shoving)

These hazards can affect you directly and/or indirectly. You should be trained to manage them when they are directly experienced by you, and also trained in what actions to take when you are affected by witnessing their occurrence in your office space.

### Emergency procedures

All workers must be aware of and be trained in emergency procedures for their workplace

### References

You can get further and more detailed information on Health and Safety in the office, including many easy to use checklists, from the following WorkSafe documents:

- OfficeWise – A Guide To Health & Safety In The Office
- Stresswise – Preventing Work-Related Stress In The Public Sector
- Your guide to Workplace bullying – prevention and response
- Prevention and management of violence and aggression in health services

### Resources

The following organisations will provide you with an extensive range of additional information on Health, Safety and Welfare in your work.

#### HACSU

<http://hacsu.asn.au>

#### Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC): OHS

<http://www.ohsrep.org.au>

#### WorkSafe Victoria:

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au>