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About Optimum Safety Management

Optimum Safety Management brings the very best qualified advice, support, consultancy and training to our clients. We strive to bring no-nonsense practical health & safety management to companies across the UK and make what is a business-critical area as easy as possible.

Home Workers – What You Need to Know

What needs to be in place in terms of workstation and display screen equipment when working from home?

For temporary home working there is no requirement for a workstation assessment. The employer does have a responsibility to provide all workers with the necessary equipment so they can work effectively and safely from home, for example screen risers, screens, a keyboard and a separate mouse. The choice of items such as desks and chairs are down to the employee.

How often should people take a break?

People should take a screen break for 5 minutes every hour. It is useful to schedule regular breaks into your workday; this will help you to stay productive and on task. This could be as simple as making a drink but having a short break from the display screen is important.

Is there anything to think about in terms of lone working?

All temporary home workers should be treated the same as any office workers. Employers must ensure there is regular contact between employees and line managers. This contact can be via email, telephone call or streaming services. Making regular contact with employees can help productivity and ensure employees feel valued and included. It is highly recommended employers use this time to check in on the employee's mental and physical well-being. It is a very different experience working from home if you are not used to it, so regular contact with employees is vitally important.

What about if someone has an accident whilst working from home?

Employers Duties

An employer is required to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees so far as is reasonably practicable. An employee working from home is owed the same duty of care as any other employee would have in an office or other normal working environment. The employer must first consider if the job and the employee are suitable for working from home. The employer's duty also extends to mental health as well as physical.

Employees Duties

It is the employee's duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety as well as that of others. This would include removing any hazards such as a trailing wire or taking any defective equipment out of use and reporting it to the employer. They must also report all employment related hazards to their employer to make them aware.



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Working from home generally involves very low risk tasks. If any accidents do occur while working at home and carrying out work activities, they should be reported to a member of management. A decision can then be made if a record of the accident should be taken or in the event of a serious accident it is reported to the HSE under RIDDOR. The employee should always contact management in the first instance and they

will seek advice from their inhouse health and safety professional or their external health and safety consultant/advisor.

Do employers have to ensure home working is included in part of risk assessment process?

The employer should carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of all work activities and take appropriate measures to reduce any associated risks. This can be a generic risk assessment issued to all employees, which highlights all hazards that need to be controlled to ensure the worker can work safely.

If the homeworker is a new or expectant mother, a separate specific risk assessment must be completed. The risk assessment must highlight all specific control measures and must take into account the risks to the child/unborn child. This risk assessment must be updated at least every month.

A separate risk assessment must also be completed if the home worker is a young person under 18 years old. The risk assessment must highlight all specific control measures to reduce the risk to the young person.

The employer must consider the risks involved in the homeworkers work activities, this includes all electrical and tripping hazards. They must check that the equipment they supply is in good working order without any visible defects that could cause a hazard to the user. The homeworker is also responsible for reporting any damaged work equipment supplied by management, this includes any broken electrical wires or equipment. Many work items used at home will be very low risk, but it is preferable to have an up to date PAT test where possible. The employee must also be supplied with the correct personal protective equipment, if needed for the task they are undertaking.

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