Ergonomics and Manual Tasks Guidelines

Commencement Date: 4/06/2012
Category: Campus Life

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance to ensure a healthy and safe workplace is provided for all University workers.

2. POLICY SUPPORTED

Health and Safety Policy

3. APPLICATION

These guidelines apply to all workers, students and visitors to Curtin University.

4. DEFINITIONS

‘workplace’ Is defined as any location where an employee works or is likely to be in the course of their work and may include home, vehicles, aircraft, ships and all fieldwork

‘manual task’ Refers to any activity or sequence of activities that requires a person to use their physical body (musculoskeletal system) to perform work

‘activity’ Refers to the movements or postures adopted at any given time in order to perform a manual task

‘hazardous manual task’ Those manual tasks that have the potential to cause injury or disease and may involve forces exerted by the worker or on the worker by an item, person or animal, awkward postures, sustained postures, repetitive movements, whole body or hand-arm vibration,

‘ergonomic’ Describes any item of furniture or equipment designed to be compatible with the limitations and capabilities of workers and their working environment

5. PROCEDURES

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<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<td>5.1 Hazardous manual tasks and risks in all workplaces will be identified.</td>
<td>• Ensure all hazardous manual tasks and risks are identified. Managers may also consider staff reports, Safety and health representative reports and past injury records when identifying hazardous manual tasks and risks.</td>
<td>• Report any hazards to their manager/supervisor and/or the area’s Safety and Health Representative, and/or Curtin Health and Safety.</td>
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<td>5.2 Practicable control measures will be applied to any identified hazardous manual tasks and risks.</td>
<td>• Ensure appropriate controls are applied to manual task hazards and risks. Ideas for controls can be accessed via the Code of Practice for Manual Tasks 2010, via the area’s Safety and Health Representative, and/or by contacting Health and Safety.</td>
<td>• Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures.</td>
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### 5.3 Each area will provide a budget for the maintenance of the working environment and appropriate equipment provision to enable all hazardous manual tasks to be carried out safely.

- Managers are responsible for the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment and equipment in their respective areas and must ensure this through their cost centre. Refer to Schedule A - Ergonomic Workstation Set Up Guidelines for a guide to office furniture/equipment that may be required, and consider specific manual handling risks for relevant manual handling equipment provision.

- Nil

### 5.4 All staff undertaking hazardous manual tasks will be provided with information and training relevant to the risk.

- Ensure staff are provided with information and training for all manual tasks, relevant to the risk, on induction and for any changes to duties/procedures. Assistance with training can be arranged by contacting Injury Management.

- Attend manual handling training sessions arranged by managers.
- Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures.

### 5.5 All staff will be provided with appropriate ergonomic office furniture in their workplace.

- Managers are responsible for the provision of appropriate ergonomic office furniture and equipment for all staff, and must ensure this through their cost centre. For advice as to what equipment may be needed, contact Injury Management.

- Report any specific furniture/equipment requirements/issues to their manager/supervisor and/or their area's Safety and Health Representative, or by contacting Injury Management.

### 5.6 All staff will have available to them instruction as to the ergonomic set up of office furniture.

- Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with instruction as to the ergonomic set up of their office, on induction, following office relocation/refurbishment, and on reporting of any symptoms. Assistance with ergonomic set up instruction can be arranged by referring staff to Schedule A - Ergonomic Workstation Set Up Guidelines and/or by contacting Injury Management.

- Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures.
- Report any symptoms at work to the manager.

### 6. EXCEPTIONS

- Nil

### 7. REFERENCES

- Code of Practice Manual Tasks 2010, WorkSafe WA

### 8. RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/LINKS

- Injury Management website
- Health and Safety website
9. RESPONSIBILITIES

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Procedure Manager</td>
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<td>Procedure Contact</td>
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REVISION HISTORY

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<th>Approved/ Rescinded</th>
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<th>Committee/ Board</th>
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<td>Director Health and Safety</td>
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Schedule A – Ergonomic Workstation Set Up Guidelines

1. Chair
   • The chair and backrest must be height adjustable and have a 5 star castor base.
   • Adjust the backrest height so the bulge of the cushion sits in the small of the back (around belt height).
   • Adjust the chair height so the forearms are parallel to the floor when the hands are on the keyboard (bent elbows should be approximately desk height).
   • Knees and hips should be level and parallel to the floor – a height and angle adjustable footrest may be required, when the chair is raised to the correct height for the keyboard.
   • If the seat slopes unnaturally, the seat pan angle may need to be adjusted so the seat is parallel with the floor.
   • If armrests prevent you from getting close to the desk, they may need to be removed.

2. Monitor, keyboard and mouse
   • The monitor should be positioned at a comfortable reading distance (may be dependent on glasses)
   • Depending on monitor size, horizontal eye level about 0-40mm from top of display.
   • If using two monitors, optimal placement is determined by use ie, primary and secondary screen or equal use of both.
   • The monitor should be free from glare.
   • The keyboard is between the monitor and the operator.
   • The mouse is adjacent to the end of the keyboard and can be used with the elbow bent and forearm supported.
   • Consult with Injury Management for advice re alternatives to the standard mouse and keyboard.

3. Workstation
   • There should be adequate leg space to allow free movement under the workstation (remove boxes or obstacles from under the desk).
   • The computer monitor and keyboard should be positioned directly in front of the office chair. Avoid placing the screen directly in front of or behind a window, or ensure any glare is suitably managed, such as by the use of blinds/window coverings.
   • Avoid sitting for prolonged periods. Alternate posture at least hourly.

4. Other equipment
   • If there is a regular requirement to copy from/refer to hard copies, consider the purchase of a document holder that can be positioned between the keyboard and screen.
   • If there is a regular requirement to access information/take notes whilst on the telephone, consider the use of a telephone headset.
   • Frequently used items should be within easy reach.
   • Consider the need for window coverings if glare is present.

Contact your Safety and Health representative and/or Injury Management for further assistance with set up, if required.
Ergonomic Workstation Set Up Guidelines

Your Eyes
Make sure you rest your eyes.
Look away from the screen at regular intervals.
Focus on a distant object (>6.0m).
Adjust the brightness and contrast controls to improve the screen image.
Tilt the screen to eliminate glare and reflections from lights or windows.

The Monitor
Make sure the monitor is centred directly in front of you - not to one side.
Depending on monitor size, horizontal eye level approx. 0-40mm below the top of the display.
Bi-focals or multifocal glasses make a difference – ask for assistance.
The monitor should be about arm’s length from your usual sitting position.

Your Arms
Let your arms hang naturally by your sides – shoulders low and relaxed.
You should have an angle of 90° or slightly greater at your elbows.
Keep your wrists straight and your hands relaxed when using the mouse and keyboard.

The Mouse & Keyboard
The keyboard is best kept flat. But you may tilt it if you need to look at it, and find this more comfortable for your neck.
ALWAYS keep the mouse in close.

Your Spine
Remember to support the natural curve of your spine.
Adjust your chair so the curve of the backrest fits snugly into the small of your back.
Use a document holder when reading or editing for prolonged periods.

The Chair
Make sure the chair is correctly adjusted to suit you and your task.
Set your chair height so that your elbow level is level with the top of the desk.
Lower the chair for reading and writing tasks.

Your Legs
Your thighs should be roughly horizontal and your lower legs at 90°.
Keep your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest.
Leave room for your legs. Store your mobile drawer unit under the storage area of your desk and don’t store other items under the desk.

The Desk
Keep frequently used items close to you.
Place the phone in close if used regularly or consider the need for a headset.
If you frequently refer to hardcopy documents, it is preferable to use a document holder designed to sit centrally between the keyboard and monitor.

Points to remember:
• Regular movement is essential. GET UP AND MOVE AROUND.
• Vary your posture throughout the day, ideally every hour.
• DON’T SLOUCH.
• Organise your day so that you have a mix of activities.
• Don’t forget to adjust your chair height and backrest angle when you change tasks.