

1. Introduction & Scope

Each year, sickness and absence costs money and lost production. Managers can take effective steps to control health risks at work and reduce much of this cost.

This guidance is directed mainly at those in charge of managing health risks at work by looking at activities with potential to harm health and suggesting actions and controls.

2. Occupational Health & Health Screening

Roman Electrical Ltd will continue to concentrate on reducing exposure to occupational health risk by changing or controlling work methods, substituting materials, selecting and providing appropriate tools, and providing training and management control.

The Company maintains an occupational health screening programme for employees to:

- Help protect the health of employees from harm and give the chance to raise any concerns about health effects of their work
 - Check that control measures are working well
 - Confirm whether employees remain fit to do their jobs
 - Use data obtained to detect and evaluate health hazards
 - Identify where further action might be needed
 - Promote healthy lifestyle choices and working practices
- a) All new employees will be given a baseline health questionnaire, which includes declaration of existing medical conditions.
- b) Safety Critical workers employed by sub-contractors will have to undergo and provide proof of fitness for work
- c) Some Regulations, including those relating to Lead, Asbestos or Ionising Radiation, require mandatory specific health surveillance.
- d) The results of medicals remain confidential except where individuals are an immediate at risk to themselves or others, where they will be referred to either their own GP (for non-work-related issues), or to an occupational health physician (for work related issues). Details of the conditions detected will not be disclosed, but a Doctors letter stating that they are or are not fit for duty will be provided to the business unit leader. Human resources will then appoint a case manager to review the situation.
- e) If an individual feel that they have a health concern, their first course of action is to contact their own GP. However, in the case of an occupational health issue, they may bring it to the attention of their manager. The Manager can then request a further Occupation Health Check Assessment.

3. New and expectant mothers at work.

Introduction

It has been established in law that discrimination that is substantially because of a woman's pregnancy is automatically unlawful sex discrimination. This principle has been extended to include the failure to conduct a risk assessment for women under the health and safety regulations.

Women who have experienced a detriment arising from a failure to comply with these health and safety regulations can bring a tribunal claim under the Sex Discrimination Act, as well as exercising their rights under the Employments Rights Act.

Process

On notification by the employee that she is pregnant, her manager should review that employee's work circumstances in the light of this information.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment, that recognises the employee's condition, should be carried out and the significant findings recorded.

Regulation 16 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to:

- Assess the risks to the health and safety of women who are pregnant, have recently given birth, or who are breastfeeding
- Ensure that workers are not exposed to risks identified by the risk assessment, which could present a danger to their health and safety

If, having taken reasonable preventative action, there remains a significant residual risk, which goes beyond that which may be expected outside the workplace, employers must take the following steps to remove the employee from that risk:

- Temporarily adjust conditions of hours of work
- If that is not reasonable or would not void the risk, they should offer her alternative work if any is available

If that is not possible, they must give her paid leave from work as long as is necessary to protect her health and safety or that of her child.

Hazard	Risk Assessment	Controls
Nauseating smells exacerbating morning sickness . eg Smells from photocopiers in office, various chemicals (mould oils, solvents etc.)	Severity of risk: Low/moderate Probability Hazard will occur: Moderate Overall risk: Moderate	Exposure should be kept to a minimum so far as is reasonably practicable.
Manual handling of loads where there is a significant risk of injury, particularly in later stages of pregnancy as a result of hormonal or postural changes. Also, to those who have recently given birth especially after a caesarean section. Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired in later stages of pregnancy.	Severity of risk: moderate, depending on load etc Probability Hazard will occur moderate, depending on activity Overall risk: Moderate.	Situation must be kept under review (particularly in later stages) and formal risk assessments made if there is an identified hazard to health. Tasks should be altered to minimise risk and aids provided if practicable. High risk operations must not be attempted, and moderate risks avoided. Backache or upper limb problems attributable to lifting should be reported.

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Fatigue from standing or physical work Risk of varicose veins may be increased by standing. Fatigue may indicate an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight.	Severity of risk: Moderate (mother) / High (child) Probability Hazard will occur: Low if care taken to avoid fatigue Overall risk: Low (mother) / Moderate (child).	Situation must be kept under review. Hours of work and pacing of work must not be excessive. Staff should have some control over organisation of work. Seating must be provided if appropriate. Rest breaks may need to be more frequent and longer. Adjustments to workstations and procedures should be made where necessary. Access to toilets and rest areas must be satisfactory. Restriction on night working, dependent on medical advice.
Heat stress Pregnant women may be more susceptible to heat stress. Breast feeding may be impaired by heat dehydration.	Severity of risk: Low/moderate Probability Hazard will occur: Low Overall risk: Low	Heat stress should not occur under conditions at work. Provide good ventilation.
Stress (including prolonged exposure to loud noise). May cause anxiety and raised blood pressure	Severity of risk: Moderate (mother/child) Probability Hazard will occur: Variable in site conditions. Low in office areas. Overall risk: Low/Moderate	Situation must be kept under review. Care should be taken to avoid placing unnecessary stress on subjects.
Slips, trips and falls Balance, speed of movement and agility may be impaired in later stages of pregnancy.	Severity of risk: Moderate (for mother) High (for child) Probability Hazard will occur: Low in office Moderate to High on site Overall risk: Moderate.	Situation must be kept under review. Obstructions and hazards should be removed where practicable. Spillages etc should be cleaned up promptly.
VDU workstations (musculo-skeletal injuries) Seating difficulties may be experienced in later pregnancy.	Severity of risk/Probability Hazard will occur: Low if workstation is set up and used properly, moderate/high otherwise. Overall risk: moderate	Situation must be kept under review. VDU workstations should be assessed and remedial action taken. Staff should be instructed in health and safety aspects of use and asked to report any back or upper limb problems attributable to VDU work.
VDU Workstations (Radiation risks)	Overall risk: Low	Levels of ionising and non-ionising radiation are well below those in international recommendations for limiting risks to human health.
Shocks, vibration or movement (to workers using heavy plant or off-road vehicles)	Severity of risk: Moderate Probability Hazard will occur: Moderate/high Overall risk: Moderate	Exposure of abdomen to jolts and shocks should be avoided.

Work with carcinogens, mutagens and teratogens (risk phrases R40, R45, R46, R47) May cause cancer or birth defects.	Severity of risk: low to Moderate Probability Hazard will occur: Generally low if control measures are observed Overall risk: low, (but should be subject to detailed assessment)	Work must be subject to detailed COSHH assessment. Pregnant or breast feeding women should not handle these substances if assessment indicates there is any level of risk
Exposure to lead and lead derivatives Exposure to lead may cause spontaneous abortion still birth and infertility. Young children may be sensitive to the toxic effects of lead.	Severity of risk: Moderate/high Probability Hazard will occur: Low/moderate Overall risk: Moderate	Exposure of women of reproductive capacity to lead must be kept under the levels set in the Control of Lead at Work Regulations (CLWR). Once pregnancy is confirmed, women subject to medical surveillance under CLWR should be suspended from work which exposes them significantly to lead.
Infectious biological agents	Severity of risk: may be high (especially if - agent is known to harm child) Probability Hazard will occur: should be low if control measures are observed Overall risk: should be subject to detailed assessment	Work must be subject to detailed COSHH assessment. Pregnant or breast-feeding women should not be allowed to work in areas with an identified source of infection- rat urine, pidgeon droppings etc
Violence	Severity of risk: Moderate (mother) high(child) Probability Hazard will occur: Low Overall risk: Low	Pregnant women should not be exposed to situations where there is any foreseeable risk of violence.

4. Repetitive Strain Injuries

Introduction

There has been a growing recognition in recent years that certain types of work-based activity can give risk to repetitive strain injuries (R.S.I.). Repetitive strain injuries can have several consequences, including serious ill health and loss of production through sickness and possible compensation claims from those who cannot work due to injury.

The most effective way to deal with R.S.I. is to ensure that it does not arise in the first place. This procedure illustrates the preventative measures to be adopted in order to minimise the possibility of employees developing repetitive strain injuries.

The protection of persons at work is covered in a number of statutory regulations, including the "Health & Safety at Work Act 1974", the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the "Health & Safety (display screen equipment) Regulations containing specific requirements relating to the use of workstations.

What are Repetitive Strain Injuries?

The most common form of R.S.I. is musculoskeletal disorders of the upper limbs, (sometimes referred to as work related upper limb disorders). These conditions affect the neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers. Symptoms may include:

- Aches and Pains
- Numbness
- Swelling
- Difficulty in moving limbs
- Muscle weakness

Who is at Risk?

- Repetitive strain injuries can affect any employee whose job involves prolonged repetition of movement or awkward posture.
- This increasingly includes people who spend a significant time using computers.

Minimising the Risk

The risk of repetitive strain injuries occurring can be reduced by:

- Recognising that the condition exists.
- Providing information to those employees at risk.
- Looking at the way a job is organized.
- Avoid long periods of repetitive movements by introducing variety into the employee's workload. If, because of the nature of the job, this is not possible, consider the introduction of formal rest breaks of 5-10 minutes per hour.
- Ensure employees' workstations meet minimum standards from Display Screen Equipment Regulations. Workstations should be assessed against DSE Self-Assessment.

This means that the workstation should be designed to provide sufficient space for the user to change position and vary movement.

In addition, the user should be provided with an adjustable chair and footrests. Copyholders should be provided where necessary.

Action in the Event of Injury

If an employee reports that they suspect that they are suffering from a repetitive strain injury, the Line Manager shall take the following action:

Seek advice from the H&S Advisor.

- Discuss the situation with the Personnel Manager.
- Refer the employee to his or her G.P.
- If following a medical examination it is found that the employee's condition has been caused or aggravated by their work, the Site Manager / Supervisor will as far as reasonably practicable, respond to and implement any work related recommendations that may involve adapting the employee's workstation or altering the nature of the employee's work. Should the situation appear to be more severe, the company may decide to refer the employee to an appropriate Medical Consultant.

5. Manual Handling

Introduction & Scope

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations require employers to avoid the need to carry out manual handling which creates a risk of injury. The “Manual Handling Operations Regulations” contain a well-defined sequence of activities that have to be followed to meet the requirements of the regulations.

This section gives procedures for assessing risk and guidelines for reducing the risk.

Procedure for Carrying Out Manual Handling Assessments

- The Manager will ensure that an initial assessment of significant risk activities has been completed which will identify manual handling concerns. All manual handling should be in accordance with HSE guidance. For example, frequently lifted loads such as blocks should not exceed 20kg, and occasional loads should not exceed 25kg in weight. For items exceeding these weights and heavier items such as plant, cable drums and trunking which present difficulties in mechanical handling, the Manager will consult the Designer, Specifiers and / or Principle Designer to discuss alternatives.
- The Manager will appoint a responsible person to carry out task risk assessments or review sub-contractor risk assessments. This will normally be the Site Manager / Supervisor assisted by the H&S Advisor who may request further assistance.
- The risk assessment must consider all other elements of the operation. For special operations, the use of a specific Manual Handling Assessment proforma, may be considered appropriate.
- The manual handling implications must be reviewed along with other risks in a risk reassessment should a change in circumstances occur.
- Completed risk assessments and specific forms are to be briefed to those carrying out the task and where applicable are to be retained on site for reference. A general training package for manual handling is available.
- Anyone injuring their back at work should be encouraged to report the injury, get early medical attention and return only gradually to handling duties.

The Manual Handling Assessment Process

When assessing Manual Handling as part of a risk assessment, consider the following:

- Look at all operations and support activities, i.e. taking materials to the workplace.
- Ask “does the work involve manual handling”? If the answer to this question is no, then the assessment need go no further for the purpose of the regulations.
- Ask “is any risk involved in carrying out the operation”?
- An initial appraisal will identify any potential risk factors. If none are found, the assessment need go no further. However, it may be wise to document that the operation has been considered and findings recorded.
- Where reasonably practicable, manual handling operations must be eliminated. This may be achieved by avoiding the operation or by using mechanical means.
- If the operation cannot be eliminated completely and residual risks remain, a detailed assessment must be made. Factors considered in the initial appraisal involving the task, load, environment and individual’s capability must be considered, and their contribution to the risk recorded.

- The above process could be assisted by some redesign by making units smaller to reduce the risk of overstrain or larger to remove the possibility of manual handling and dictate mechanical handling. In this case, the design should consider lifting points, inserts and information and recommendations on handling.
- It should be noted that risk assessment is an ongoing process, rather than a one-off activity. Therefore, assessments must be reviewed whenever there is reason to suspect that the information, they hold is no longer relevant. This could be due to changes to the equipment used, the handlers involved or the method of carrying out the operation.
- When manual handling is necessary, injury may be prevented by:
 - a) Avoidance of unnecessary handling
 - b) Identifying, before work is begun, operations that involve either lifting heavy or awkward loads or repetitive lifting operations.
 - c) Find ways of either avoiding the operation altogether or using mechanical aids to minimise the amount of manual handling by for example the use of wheelbarrows, hoists, telehandlers, and other plant and equipment so that the manual lifting of heavy objects is kept to absolutely minimum.
 - d) Sharing heavy or awkward loads which have to be lifted by hand;
 - e) Positioning loads by machine and planning to reduce the height from which they have to be lifted and the distance over which they have to be carried;
 - f) All Roman Electrical Ltd workers will be trained in safe lifting techniques and sensible handling of loads;
 - g) Not requiring anyone to lift building blocks weighing more than 20 kg;
 - h) Ordering bagged materials in small easily handled sizes where possible; most building products are now available in 25 kg bags.
 - i) Guidance on liaising with designers and specifiers on design hazards including weight and the nature of loads to be lifted

Additional Information

Further guidance can be obtained from the H&S Advisor.

6. Stress Management

Stress is a natural reaction people have to excessive pressures or other demands placed on them. Roman Electrical Ltd recognises that prolonged or intense Work-Related Stress (WRS) could lead to illness.

As a Company we operate an open-door policy to all management. If any employee wishes to discuss any issues relating to their work commitments they may, with the knowledge that it is under strict confidentiality. Performance Management Procedures are set throughout the group to identify areas for development and wellbeing of all our employees.

Complete confidential support by professionals is also available from an independent external company and details of this service are made available to our staff.

We have a duty to ensure that our employees are not harmed by WRS when exposed to excessive workplace demands over and above those expected in the Business and the employee brings it to our attention.

In these circumstances, the line manager must consider:

- Investigating (through external agencies where appropriate) the reason for the reported stress

- Carrying out assessments of risk from Work related stress to our employees' health or the health of others who may be affected
- Implementing measures to reduce exposure to stress
- Consult our employees directly or through other representatives about organisational changes that may significantly affect their health and safety

7. Display Screen Equipment, EYE-SIGHT TESTS

Introduction

This procedure covers the use of display screen equipment, procedures for eyesight tests and how to use the VDU / Workstation Assessment sheet

Application

- The regulations are applicable to all "users" of Display Screen Equipment (DSE), whether they use their equipment for working in their own or another employer's premises, or at home.
- A user is generally a person who uses display screen equipment to do their job for continuous periods of more than an hour, usually on a daily basis.

Risks Associated with Using DSE

- There are health risks associated with DSE but these can be significantly reduced by individuals carrying out VDU assessments. These will check that their workstations are laid out in the correct manner to prevent bad posture and any stretching or repetitive turning. Taking suitable breaks can also reduce risks to DSE users.

Risk Assessment of VDU Workstations

- The user should undertake a risk assessment for each workstation annually or when changing location, using VDU / Workstation Assessment Form.
- The check should be initiated by the user's line manager who will provide or arrange for assistance where required.
- Any actions required and by whom, should be agreed with the appropriate line manager and noted on the form.
- The line manager is responsible for ensuring agreed actions are taken. Completed forms are to be forwarded to the appropriate HR Manager for retention.

Eyes & Eyesight Tests

- Roman Electrical Ltd will pay for an appropriate eye test on request from any employee VDU user if countersigned by the user's Site Manager and forwarded to the H&S Advisor.
- The H&S Advisor will either advise on an appropriate optician or approve the use of the user's optician. Reasonable expenses for an eye test will be reimbursed via the company expenses on a submission of a valid receipt.
- If the optician states in writing that glasses are required specifically for DSE work, the company will pay a contribution towards the cost of the glasses if any change in prescription is required again as a result of deterioration due to VDU's.

- It should be noted that this applies only where they are required specifically for DSE work and that if glasses are worn or required for reading or driving and also incidentally for DSE work, these will not be paid for.
- Eyesight is precious and the user can do a lot to help themselves e.g. Take regular breaks, prevent glare on screen, prevent excessive contrast, ensure correct lighting etc

8. Procurement & Use of Safety Equipment

- Roman Electrical Ltd maintains a list of approved safety / protective equipment and supplies commonly used on its projects and establishments and makes arrangements for stocks to be held on sites.
- The H&S Advisor liaises with procurement department to ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment and other health, safety and welfare related products are included on such lists and are therefore readily available to all sites.

Issue & Use

- Appropriate PPE is identified by risk assessment and detailed in the method statements and task sheets.
- Where issued, they will be signed out to the operative(s) involved. The operative must be briefed on their use where appropriate, particularly in the use of respiratory equipment. The operative will only sign the issue sheet once he fully understands the stated safe use of the PPE. All equipment returned to the store must be checked, cleaned and correctly stored.
- The user has a responsibility to maintain their own personal PPE where they are competent to do so.
- f will ensure that all their subcontractors make their own arrangements for issue but will check these arrangements are adequate and implemented.

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