

REMOTE WORKING Safe Work Practice Sheet	Ref: N/A
	Revision Date: March 2020
	Revision 1: June 2020
	Revision 2: November 2020
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Hazards

- Manual handling
- Slips, trips and falls
- Electrical items
- Work Station / Display Screen Equipment
- Lone working
- Stress and welfare

Person Exposed to Risk

Students Employees Public Contractors Visitors

Work Description

Remote working – working from a remote location or home office space

Control Measures

1 Deciding on a location for your work space at home

Consider the following;

- Do you have a suitable space to work from?
- Can you access the workspace easily and safely?
- Is there adequate light, ventilation and heat to allow you to work comfortably?
- Is there enough space to allow you to work without twisting, bending or sitting/standing awkwardly?
- Is there enough workspace to accommodate the equipment or other materials needed for the activity?
- Is the floor clear and dry, e.g., kept clear of electrical cables or anything else you could trip over / slip on?
- Is the workspace free of clutter?
- Are electrical sockets, plugs and cords in good condition e.g. no charring or frayed wires?

2 General considerations when working from home

- Observe good manual handling techniques at all times.
- Place equipment in a position as to minimise twisting or overreaching.
- Have enough working space for the equipment and any other materials needed to carry out the work.
- Keep a clean and tidy workplace to prevent slips, trips and falls.

- Maintain clear access & egress routes.
- Ensure enough space is available around the work area.
- Maintain contact with colleagues and Management/HOS/HOD.
- Wash your hands regularly and wipe down keyboard, mouse, touch screens etc.
- As with general home safety it is recommended that you have a working smoke alarm and fire extinguisher available and a clear escape route. Fire detection and firefighting equipment is the responsibility of the homeowner.
- Take regular breaks or vary work tasks to ensure that you are not working in the same position for long periods of time. Change posture frequently - stand/move at least every 30 minutes.
- Any accident or incident occurring because of working from home activities must be reported to management as soon as possible <https://www.dkit.ie/health-safety/incidents-accidents-reporting-procedures>.
- Where possible ensure that work equipment is in good condition and positioned in such a way to minimise the risk of Musculoskeletal Disorders injuries or strain.



3 Building your work station

- Ideally, try to use a height-adjustable chair with lumbar support and arm rests. You can use your own chair or take your chair from your office on campus for use at home (request via your Manager / H & S office).
- Adjust your chair so your feet are flat on the floor, while fully supporting your thighs. If you have an office chair, adjust it accordingly. Otherwise, sit upright and all the way back in the chair. Use a cushion to support a more upright posture if necessary.
- An approximate 90° angle between upper and lower arm is recommended, shoulders should be relaxed and head naturally balanced.
- Adjust the height of your monitor so it is at your eye-level.
- Place your keyboard centred on your work surface.
- Use an independent mouse.
- The most important objects / documents on your work surface should be reachable.
- Make an effort keeping a good posture. Be mindful with your body.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Avoid eye strain.

4 Posture

- Don't slouch.
- Keep your elbows close to your body and keep your wrists straight.
- Keep your shoulders and back relaxed.

- Make sure there is sufficient space under your desk to move your legs freely and remove any obstacles that might prevent this.



5 Take frequent breaks

- Sitting in one place staring at the same screen all day is bad for you. You want to take frequent five minute breaks away from your screen and do some stretching exercises. Regular breaks must be taken. Change posture frequently - stand/move at least every 30 minutes.
- Where possible avoid back-to-back video calls/online meetings so that you are not sitting for long periods of time.

6 Avoid eye strain

- Arrange your work surface and DSE to avoid glare or bright reflections on screen. This will be easier if neither you or the screen is directly facing windows or bright sunlight. Adjust curtains and blinds as necessary.
- Ensure your eyes are tested regularly.

7 Create Boundaries

- Set your working times and communicate these to your colleagues e.g. the hours you work each day when you are available for emails, calls, meetings, video calls etc.
- Turn off notifications on devices outside of these times.

8 Working with DSE/ computer

- Adjust the height of your monitor so it is at your eye-level e.g. use books or material at home if the height needs to be raised.
- Centre your keyboard on your desk/ table.
- Use a mouse separate to the keyboard. You can take small items e.g. mouse/keyboard/footstool/wrist rest from your office on campus for use at home (request via your Manager / H & S office).
- The most important objects/ documents on your work surface should be within reach.

9 Working with Laptops

- Place laptop on a firm surface – not on your lap.
- Give yourself enough space to work.
- Sit comfortably without slouching or stooping.
- Where possible connect the laptop to a full-size monitor and plug in mouse.
- If not possible, centre your laptop on your work surface. Adjust the height of your laptop so the screen is at your eye-level e.g. use laptop stand or books/materials at home if the height needs to be raised.
- Link up to separate mouse and keyboard.
- Position screen around arm's length away from your face and at the correct height to allow a comfortable neck position. Have your eyes roughly in line with the top of your screen.

- Find a position in which you can keep your wrists straight (neutral, in line with forearms), your shoulders should be relaxed and your back supported and in which you feel comfortable.
- Align the laptop centrally with your body, don't twist round to use it.
- Adjust the laptop screen if necessary, to reduce stretching your neck.
- Position your screen away from direct window light.
- Keep the amount of kit you carry with the laptop to a minimum.
- Carrying a heavy load on one shoulder may strain your back. Swap shoulders to reduce strain.
- Do not use defective equipment.

10 Working with a Smartphone

Simple Set-up

- Keep the number of Apps to a minimum
- Use the same App for several functions e.g. MS Outlook 365 can be used for email, calendar, MS Teams
- Use Apps to set reminders e.g. a specific amount of time before a meeting starts
- Create a folder on your home screen with your most used/needed Apps.
- Use Voice Recognition Technology. Use this to reply to emails or dictate responses and reviews instead of typing.

Typing Time

- Turn on predictive text so you don't have to type the full word to help reduce screen time.

Calls/Meetings

- Position the phone at a comfortable level.
- Use the speaker or a headset instead of holding the phone to your ear.

Reviewing Documents

- Change to landscape view.
- Prop smartphone up to eye level where possible to scroll through the document and make notes.
- Review in short blocks of time taking a break every 10 minutes to stretch and change position.
- Add a note to your signature if you wish to ask people to ignore spelling and grammatical errors during this time.
- Let people know you are working from a smartphone and as a result the same level of productivity is not possible.

Checks & Inspections

If you are using electrical equipment it is recommended that you carry out the following basic checks on a regular basis;

- Electrical equipment is turned off before it is checked.
- Plugs are not damaged.
- Leads, wires or cables do not have damage to the outer covering.
- There are no burn marks or staining that suggests overheating.
- There are no trailing wires.

Information, Instruction & Training

If you have any concerns about the safety of your home working arrangements, you should speak to your manager/HOS/HOD.

This Safe Work Practice Sheet - SWPS Remote Working.

Dundalk Institute of Technology Remote Working Policy.

DKIT COVID-19 Task Force [DKIT Covid-19 Staff Portal](#), Email covidenquiries@dkit.ie
<https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/coronavirus/staff-update.html>

Notify any accidents or incidents that occur via normal reporting channels
<https://www.dkit.ie/health-safety/incidents-accidents-reporting-procedures>

The Health & Safety Authority at www.hsa.ie
https://www.hsa.ie/eng/supports_for_business/business_and_education_supports/guidance_for_employers_and_employees_working_from_home/

Personal protective equipment required (last resort)

N/A

Initial Risk Rating (without any control measures)

Probability : x Severity = Risk Factor

KEY		
PROBABILITY	SEVERITY	RISK FACTOR
Probable 3	Critical 3	1-3 Low Risk
Possible 2	Serious 2	4 Medium Risk
Unlikely 1	Minor 1	6-9 High Risk
Risk Factor = Probability x Severity		

Risk Reduction Rating (after controls introduced)

Probability : x Severity = Risk Factor

Risk Assessment Review

As and when process changes

Remote Working – Risk assessment / Checklist

Name:		Date:	
Work Activity:		Location:	Home Office
Manager:		School / Dept.:	

Hazard Checklist

Workstation	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
The workstation has adequate space for equipment including mouse, keyboard, laptop, laptop stand, monitor (where applicable) and allows the employee to find a comfortable position.				
Is there a dedicated work space that can be set up in the home that is safe, suitable and free from distractions?				
Is there enough knee clearance underneath the workstation?				
Is there enough space to allow the employee to change position and vary movements?				
Is the area clutter free so that the employee can focus easily on the task?				
Is a document holder required to read documents?				

Chair	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is the chair stable, adjustable in height, allows freedom of movement and provides lower back support?				
Is the chair set up so that the forearms are level with the desk?				
The chair has a back rest which is adjustable in height and the employee has been advised to sit back in their seat in order to get good lumbar support?				
Is the chair adjustable to allow feet to rest flat on the floor or is a footrest supplied?				
Is a footrest required?				
Screen	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is the screen positioned to avoid glare and reflection (for example sit at 90 degrees to a window to avoid glare)?				
Can the screen swivel and tilt easily?				
Is the screen positioned so that the top of the screen is at eye level or slightly below and avoids sustained bending of the neck?				
Is the screen free of reflective glare and are reflections liable to cause discomfort?				

Cont.	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is the screen set up at a comfortable distance (for example arm length away)?				
Is the image on the screen stable with no flickering?				
Are the characters on the display screen well defined, clearly formed of adequate size and with adequate spacing?				
Has the employee been informed that they should relax their shoulders when viewing the screen?				Yes – information provided as part of SWPS on Remote Working
Communication	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is a headset/speaker or microphone provided for communication?				
Are arrangements in place to consult with employees and for them to report issues for example accidents, health related issues, workload, faulty equipment, working hours?				Yes – refer to DkIT Remote working policy.
Keyboard / Mouse	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is the laptop/PC connected to an external keyboard and mouse?				
Is a neutral wrist posture maintained when typing (for example no bending of the wrist)?				

Cont.	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Slope angle of the keyboard can be adjusted so as to allow the employee to find a comfortable position.				
Are the mouse and keyboard within easy reach with space provided in front of the keyboard?				
Are wrist rests required?				
Lighting	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Employee checks suitable lighting (for example natural, task lighting) is available to take account of the type of work being carried out and their vision?				
Is task lighting available if required?				
Health	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Are eye and eyesight tests provided as needed?				Can be applied for via HR.
Is the employee required to carry out manual handling (If the employee has to carry out manual handling activities make sure that employee is trained).				
Has the employee been advised to report any musculoskeletal discomfort?				Yes – as per SWPS on Remote Working

Cont.	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Has the employee been advised to change posture frequently and to stand/move at least every 30 minutes?				Yes – as per SWPS on Remote Working.
Has the employee been advised to avoid back-to-back video calls/online meetings so that they do not sit for long periods of time?				Yes – as per SWPS on Remote Working.
Are work days planned so that work can be varied if possible (for example write up notes, take a call away from desk)?				
Are there arrangements in place for monitoring and keeping in contact with the home worker?				Yes – as per DkIT Remote working policy.
Heating / Ventilation	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Employee checks the room is warm enough and has adequate ventilation e.g. windows can open.				
Electricity	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Household electrical supply and equipment for example sockets, lighting, RCD, heaters that are not provided by the employer are checked by the employee on a regular basis.				
Is the area around the workstation kept clear of trailing cables and trip hazards?				
Is there an adequate number of sockets available?				

Cont.	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Is portable electrical equipment provided by the employer checked regularly and is unsafe equipment taken out of use (check for frayed wires, signs of burns or melting)?				
Fire	Yes	No	N/A	Comment/Action
Homeowner checks firefighting and detection equipment regularly and emergency plan is in place in case of fire (Fire detection and firefighting equipment is the responsibility of the homeowner).				
Summary of action to be taken to address any issues:				
Signed (Employee)				
Signed (Manager)				