

SAFETY POLICIES AND TRAINING MATERIALS

These written policies are meant to make the Practice a safe place to work. As with any workplace, safety involves a cooperative effort between the Practice and all employees to provide a safe environment, develop safety policies, and maintain the safe environment while living up to the safety policies.

This policy relates to the Practice’s general operations, DMEPOS operations, and routine in-office procedures. Issues that relate to ionizing radiation equipment (X-rays), Office Based Surgery Centers, surgical work done outside the office (i.e. in the hospital), in-office clinical lab work subject to the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA), in-office vascular laboratory work, and/or other types of operations are expressly excluded from this document.

Other than surgical, office procedure, imaging equipment, and lab risks, the primary safety risks for our Practice come from 13 primary areas. Each one has been described below with the attendant policies. If any questions arise, please contact the Office Manager immediately. In all cases, use common sense and make the choices that are the safest for you, while not doing harm to others.

This training is required for all new employees and will be given once a year to all employees. The training will generally take the form of reading of this policy, taking a quiz, and answering any questions that arise. Please remember to be safe both on and off the job!

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REQUIRED OSHA POSTER—PLEASE POST IN ALL FACILITIES

**Job Safety and Health
IT'S THE LAW!**

OSHA
**Occupational Safety
and Health Administration**
U.S. Department of Labor

EMPLOYEES:

- You have the right to notify your employer or OSHA about workplace hazards. You may ask OSHA to keep your name confidential.
- You have the right to request an OSHA inspection if you believe that there are unsafe and unhealthful conditions in your workplace. You or your representative may participate in that inspection.
- You can file a complaint with OSHA within 30 days of retaliation or discrimination by your employer for making safety and health complaints or for exercising your rights under the OSH Act.
- You have a right to see OSHA citations issued to your employer. Your employer must post the citations at or near the place of the alleged violation.
- Your employer must correct workplace hazards by the date indicated on the citation and must certify that these hazards have been reduced or eliminated.
- You have the right to copies of your medical records or records of your exposure to toxic and harmful substances or conditions.
- Your employer must post this notice in your workplace.
- You must comply with all occupational safety and health standards issued under the *OSH Act* that apply to your own actions and conduct on the job.

EMPLOYERS:

- You must furnish your employees a place of employment free from recognized hazards.
- You must comply with the occupational safety and health standards issued under the *OSH Act*.

**This free poster available from OSHA -
*The Best Resource for Safety and Health***

Free assistance in identifying and correcting hazards or complying with standards is available to employers, without citation or penalty, through OSHA-supported consultation programs in each state.

1-800-321-OSHA

www.osha.gov

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Source: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/poster.html> . This poster, if its state equivalent, must be posted in the workplace. Free copies are available by contacting OSHA.

EMERGENCY & ROBBERY

All employees should know to call 911 in an emergency. Also, please observe the following:

- Know where all of the exits from the office are. Ask your Office Manager if you have any questions.
- OUR WRITTEN FIRE PLAN IS AS FOLLOWS: IF THERE IS A FIRE, EVACUATE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY THROUGH ONE OF THE EXITS AND CALL 911. CONVENE IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING—Approximately 50-75 feet directly in front of the front door (on the other side of the street). FOR A HEADCOUNT. DO NOT REENTER THE BUILDING.
- If an intruder threatens to hurt you if you do not turn over cash or valuables, give them the money IMMEDIATELY. Do not resist at all. Once they leave, lock the door and call 911 and give a complete description.
- If you have a violent person (whether an unruly patient, an angry spouse of a staff member, or a random intruder) call 911 immediately. Do not try to physically subdue a violent person by yourself. Remain calm and try to escape the situation. If escape is impossible, try to calm the person down and buy time until help arrives.
- KEEP THE BACK DOOR(S) OR SIDE DOOR(S) LOCKED AT ALL TIMES.
- If the office has a security alarm, please arm the alarm each night.
- There is an OSHA approved first aid kit in each office. The medical staff are trained in first aid and CPR, and are required to keep their CPR training current.
- If there are any other emergencies, get to a safe place and call 911.
- Notify Senior Management and the Office Manager immediately of any emergencies. If you cannot reach these people, please notify anyone in the office who can assist you.

FIRE HAZARD

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of fire hazards.

- If a fire occurs, evacuate the space and call 911.
- Our office, like most medical offices, has a “normal” risk of fire. Specific risks come from some of the machines, our heat gun/ovens, and the chemicals/solvents we use. The OSHA Compliance Officer will routinely inspect for the safe treatment of such items and give specific instruction and education if a specific fire hazard is determined.
- Never smoke or use actual exposed flames in or around the office.
- Check to make sure that the fire extinguisher is mounted near the workbench and that it has not expired. Make sure you know how to work the fire extinguisher by reviewing the instructions on the fire extinguisher at least once a year. You are not required to use the fire extinguisher.
- Treat the heat gun as if it were a blowtorch. Never leave it on and unattended. Unplug it when not in use. Never use it near flammable chemicals or liquids (such as Barge cement or Barge thinner).
- For locations with an oven—only keep the oven on when needed. Treat it as if it was an open fire source. Never leave it unattended.
- Never block fire exits or sprinklers with boxes or other supplies.
- Do not let cardboard, paper, or other flammable waste accumulate in the office.
- If equipment seems to be generating excessive heat, notify the OSHA Compliance Officer immediately and watch the machine for possible fire hazard. Turn the machine off, if possible, until it can be serviced.
- If you get burned, seek immediate first aid.

- Due to the small and intimate size of our office, we will use voice alarms (i.e. yelling or shouting) to notify others of fire emergencies and what to do about them.
- The OSHA Compliance Officer initiates recharging of our fire extinguishers. You may ignore “door-to-door” salesmen posing as “inspectors” who come in and tag the extinguisher and charge \$50-\$100. Unless they have a badge and are a fire chief or sheriff, you do not need their services and you may ask them to leave—no matter how official they make it sound. The OSHA Compliance Officer will ensure all extinguishers are kept up to date.
- Please use extreme caution when handling or working around flammable gases. Ensure that all wiring is safely installed in rooms where flammable gases are used.

SLIP, TRIP, AND FALL

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of slip, trip, and fall hazards.

- Always watch where you are walking. Look for and avoid tripping hazards.
- Keep the floor free of tripping hazards such as papers, supplies, Brannock devices, packaging, shoe boxes, and fitting stools.
- Never stand on the top three rungs of a ladder.
- Never pull things down from a tall shelf without being sure that something won't fall and hit you. Know what is coming down before you pull.
- If something spills on the floor, mop it up immediately and notify all co-workers of the incident. Create a notice or perimeter around the area until it dries—use the yellow plastic “Wet Floor” sign to mark the area. If the spill is a bodily fluid, please use the proper disinfectant. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- During snow or ice conditions, please keep the sidewalks and front doorway clear of snow and ice. Call the landlord for immediate action if the conditions persist. Put up slippery when wet sign to alert customers and other employees to the issues. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.

GRINDER/MACHINE USE

For offices with a grinder, please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of grinder hazards.

- Before using the grinder or other machinery, inspect it to make sure that it has no apparent flaws or problems, that belts are in their proper places, and that no unsafe items are in the work area. Test the machine before use.
- Never use the grinder or other machinery until you have been trained in proper technique by a doctor and until you have read these safety policies.
- Never use the grinder or other machinery if it is broken. Call the Office Manager immediately if you suspect a problem.
- Never leave the grinder or other machinery on unattended.
- Stay clear of the grinder or other machinery if someone else is operating it.
- Empty the grinder bag at the first of every month.
- When using the grinder, never allow your fingers or clothes to touch the grinding wheel. Make sure that you have no loose clothing, hair, or jewelry, and that you are wearing your protective apron. **In no cases should you operate the grinder with a necktie hanging down.** Either take your tie off, securely tuck it into your shirt, or wear a protective apron, gown, or lab coat.
- If the grinder “grabs” the item you are grinding, turn the machine off before retrieving it. Never stick any body parts near the grinder while it is on.

- Always hold the item you are grinding in such a way that your fingers are clear of the sandpaper. Never rush when using the grinder. Use a thin wooden board under the item being worked on for support and resistance while keeping your fingers clear.
- Always wear eye protection and a face mask when using the grinder.
- Each office has a bottle of saline eyewash or eyewash station that is to be used if a particle comes in contact with your eyes. To use the bottle of saline eyewash, break off the top of the bottle and douse your eyes. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.

KNIFE AND TOOL USE

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of cutting hazards.

- Send heavy-duty cutting jobs to the foot orthotic or shoe modification lab to be performed. Only minor jobs should be done at the office.
- Before using any tool, inspect it to make sure that it has no apparent flaws or problems, and that it is sharp.
- Use good judgment when using a knife or cutting instrument: cut away from yourself or on a table top; do not cut when other people are around; be careful of your fingers.
- Always cut with the blade of the knife angled away from you. Never try to open a can or bottle with a knife or use a knife as a screwdriver. Don't use a knife to cut string, metal, or paper.
- Always use a cutting board/surface. Never cut anything that is placed in your hand. Use the board and make sure it has ample space for the task.
- Use the right knife for the job.
- Always hold a knife by its handle, never the blade.
- Store knives properly-a knife block or knife rack is best. If you are storing knives in a drawer, make sure to keep them in a separate compartment, away from other utensils.
- If you should happen to drop a knife, don't try to catch it. Step back alertly and wait until the knife comes to a complete rest before picking it up. Keep your mind focused on the job when using a knife.
- Be careful when using other hand tools, such as Dremels, etc.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Please follow safe practices when using electrical equipment. Keep electrical equipment and cords away from water. In addition, follow these OSHA requirements.

- All lamps for general illumination must be protected from accidental contact or breakage by a suitable fixture or lamp holder with a guard. Brass shell, paper-lined sockets, or other metal-cased sockets may not be used unless the shell is grounded. OSHA 1910.305(a)(2)(ix)
- Flexible cords and cables (extension cords) shall be protected from accidental damage, as might be caused, for example, by sharp corners, projections, and doorways or other pinch points. OSHA 1910.305(a)(2)(x)
- Cable assemblies and flexible cords and cables (extension cords) must be supported in place at intervals that ensure that they will be protected from physical damage. Support shall be in the form of staples, cables ties, straps, or similar type fittings installed so as not to cause damage. OSHA 1910.305(a)(2)(xi)
- Nongrounding-type receptacles and connectors may not be used for grounding-type attachment plugs.

- All appliances used should be UL listed, or similar.
- If flammable gases are in use, OSHA has special wiring requirements.

CHEMICAL AND SOLVENT USE

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of chemical hazards. This information compliments our Hazard Communications policy at PDPM 09.61.

- In each office is the PDPM binder containing Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the chemicals we commonly use. Each employee is responsible for reading the MSDS and understanding the important safety risks involved. In addition, each employee is responsible for proper use and handling of each chemical, in accordance with the MSDS.
- Included in your office's PDPM binder is a copy of our Written Hazard Communication Program, which is our policy for dealing with hazardous chemicals and materials. Any questions should be directed directly to the OSHA Compliance Officer. We will rely on MSDSs obtained from manufacturers or distributors supplying materials used in our workspace. We will procure up to date MSDSs for all of the chemicals we regularly use in the office. All employees will receive hazard communication training annually.
- The safety section of the PDPM binder has a memo explaining how to read Hazardous Material labels, and a poster serving in lieu of labels for our chemicals. Also, each office has a poster with quick first aid information about each of our chemicals. Please learn the information in each of these posters.
- Hazard communication training sessions will be held annually. Whenever a new, specific hazard is introduced into the workplace, affected employees will be trained in ways they can lower their risks of overexposure to that hazardous material.
- Each office has a bottle of saline eyewash that is to be used if a chemical comes in contact with your eyes. To use the eyewash, break off the top of the bottle and douse your eyes. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- Do not inhale or ingest any of our chemicals. Also, do not let them come into contact with your eyes or skin. IF ANY CHEMICAL IS SWALLOWED, CALL THE POISON CONTROL CENTER AT 1-800-552-6337
- Contact the OSHA Compliance Officer immediately if: 1) you think you have been overexposed to a chemical, 2) you think a co-worker has been overexposed to a chemical, 3) you discover an unsafe situation, 4) you have questions regarding a MSDS.
- For a list of the chemicals and solvents we use, please see the Haz-Com policy in the PDPM binder.
- We also use standard commercial cleaning supplies. In the quantities that we use them, our cleaning supplies are not subject to special handling above and beyond normal common sense. However, we have included them to make our workplace that much safer.
- Do not eat your lunch or take breaks near the workbench or wherever chemicals are stored.

LIFTING

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of lifting hazards.

- When lifting large or heavy objects, do the following: 1) Assess the object you are about to lift. 2) Bend at your knees, not your waist. 3) Tuck your pelvis under and firm-up your stomach muscles just before you lift. 4) Hug the object you are lifting close to your body. 5) Lift with your leg muscles. Have someone help you if necessary.

- Remember these lifting tips: 1) Never twist your body while lifting. 2) Make sure your walkway is clear. 3) Know where you will put the load down. 4) Use the appropriate footwear when lifting. 5) Use mechanical help or the assistance of a co-worker when necessary. 6) Push, don't pull. 7) Practice good posture. 8) Exercise for a healthy back.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Please follow the following policies to reduce the risk of bloodborne pathogen hazards. This summary of policies complements our official Bloodborne Pathogen Policy located at PDPM 09.03.

- It is our policy to treat all human blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) as if they contain bloodborne pathogens and to take Universal Precautions (using gloves and other needed barriers to prevent transmission of diseases).
- Always wear vinyl gloves when dealing with feet with open sores, ulcers, or wounds or with any other feet where the practitioner thinks there could be a risk of infection or contamination. These vinyl gloves should be discarded immediately after use. Please note that we do not use latex gloves as many people have allergies to latex. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- Practitioners should wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day and after dealing with any patient with open sores.
- All work surfaces should be promptly cleansed with the appropriate medical-grade disinfectant and/or a solution of bleach and water (Recipe for Bleach Disinfecting Solution 1/4 cup bleach with 1 gallon of cool water (OR 1 tablespoon bleach with 1 quart cool water). See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- Feet with exposed open sores or soiled bandages should never be placed in our off-the-shelf shoes. The patient has a responsibility to have their sores properly bandaged before trying on footwear. Please have a medical practitioner re-bandage the patient with fresh, clean bandages.
- When plaster or fiberglass casting a foot with an open sore, the sore should be wrapped in clear plastic wrap. The clear plastic wrap should be bagged and then discarded immediately when finished casting (see discussion below of Hazardous Waste). See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- Any employee who believes they have been exposed to bloodborne pathogens should seek immediate medical attention and contact the OSHA Compliance Officer.
- The OSHA Compliance Officer maintains a log of injuries (if any) at the office.
- When dealing with patients with open sores, always keep your work area clean and clutter-free. Clean and decontaminate the work area after use. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- When doffing soiled gloves, follow the Red Cross method always keeping clean sides touching clean sides and soiled sides touching soiled sides.
- Any gloves, plastic wrap, or bandages that have touched open sores should be considered Hazardous Biomedical Waste. We have our Hazardous Biomedical Waste specially disposed of, in accordance with local ordinances.
- Through our workman's compensation insurance, post-exposure evaluations and follow-ups are also provided for an employee who has been exposed to an incident involving the release of blood or OPIM. For more information, contact the OSHA Compliance Officer.
- Bloodborne pathogen training and retraining will occur once a year.

LATEX ALLERGY

Some people develop allergic reactions after repeated contact with latex, especially latex gloves. Allergy to latex is an increasing health problem. We will never be a latex-free Practice as too many DMEPOS components are constructed from latex. However, there are certain places where we want to limit our latex risk, where possible.

What are the symptoms?

Latex reactions can vary from minor to life-threatening, or they may progress from a less serious reaction to a more serious one. Examples include:

- Skin reactions such as contact dermatitis, hives, or generalized itching.
- Respiratory reactions. A person who is having a mild respiratory reaction may sneeze, cough, or have a runny nose. A person who is having a severe respiratory reaction may develop shortness of breath from swelling of the throat or severe wheezing.
- Life-threatening allergic reactions.

How is it treated?

Some medications may help reduce the allergy symptoms, but complete latex avoidance, though difficult, is the most effective treatment. Serious reactions may need to be treated in a hospital emergency department. **CALL 911.**

Anyone who has had a previous serious reaction to latex should carry and know how to use an allergy kit, which contains an injection of epinephrine.

GERM TRANSFER

Germs are found all over the world, in all kinds of places. There are four major types of germs: bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. They can invade plants, animals, and people, and sometimes they make us sick.

Most germs are spread through the air in sneezes, coughs, or even breaths. Germs can also spread in sweat, saliva, and blood. Some pass from person to person by touching something that is contaminated, like shaking hands with someone who has a cold and then touching your own nose. The best way to protect yourself from germs is to steer clear of the things that can spread them:

- Washing your hands well and often is the best way to beat germs. Wash your hands every time you cough or sneeze, before you eat or prepare foods, after you use the bathroom, after you touch animals and pets, after you play outside, and after you help a patient.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze and cover your mouth when you cough to keep from spreading germs. Use tissues.
- Use hand sanitizer. See PDPM 01.50 for ordering info if out of supplies.
- Get a Flu shot each year.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Though our offices are in reasonably safe areas and our office closes at a reasonable hour, it is still important to be vigilant and alert when crossing the parking lot/garage. Please follow these key points:

- We advise against leaving the office alone, but recommend that you leave in pairs.

- Park only in a well-lighted and a highly-visible location.
- Park in higher traffic areas of the lot, if possible.
- Move your car during the day to improve its location.
- Remove all interior valuables from plain view.
- Lock your doors and roll up all windows.
- Use a highly-visible steering wheel or brake pedal locking device.
- Use a car alarm and alarm decals, if possible.
- Plan when to go and where to park. Closest is not always best.
- Be aware and alert to potential predators in the parking lot.
- Do not get out of the car if you see suspicious individuals. Follow your instincts.
- Upon return, scan the area around your car as you approach it.
- Enter and exit the car quickly and lock all doors.
- Yell at anyone following you, without stopping to confront him.
- Return to the office if anyone looks or acts suspicious and lock the door once you are safely inside.
- Call the police or notify security of any suspicious activity.

ERGONOMICS/REPETITIVE STRESS

As we spend increasing amounts of time at our computer workstations, we need to be aware of how the design and arrangement of our equipment can impact our comfort, health, and productivity. The CDC recommends the following to reduce injuries and fatigue from repetitive stress injuries:

WORK AREA

The work area should be large enough to accommodate you, allow the full range of motions involved in performing required tasks, and provide room for the equipment and materials that make up the workstation.

- Use a headset for lengthy or frequent telephone work.
- Place the items you use most frequently directly in front of you.
- Avoid overcrowding computer work areas.

DESK/WORKSTATION

Standard furniture cannot accommodate everyone's needs. A taller person may need a one-time adjustment to have his or her work surface raised somewhat; a shorter person may need a footrest or other accessories. Adjustable furniture may be needed in situations where people share or use the same workstation.

- The desktop should be organized so that frequently used objects are close to the user to avoid excessive extended reaching.
- The work surface should have a matte finish to minimize glare or reflections.
- The area underneath the desk should always be clean/uncluttered to accommodate the user's legs and allow for stretching.
- If a fixed-height desk is used, add a keyboard tray that adjusts vertically to provide added adjustability.
- A footrest should be used if, after adjusting the height of the chair, feet do not rest flat on the floor.
- Use a headset or speaker phone to avoid neck and shoulder discomfort if you use a phone frequently throughout the day.
- Place the phone on the side of your non-dominant hand (i.e. left side if right-handed, right side if left-handed).

- Position your desk lamp (if you use one) so that it illuminates source documents without causing either glare on the computer screen or direct illumination to your eyes.
- A document holder should be used if documents are referred to during keying. The document holder should:
 - Be stable and adjustable (height, position, distance, and angle of view).
 - Support your document on either side of the monitor.
 - Be at the same distance from your eyes as the display screen to avoid frequent changes of focus and you should be able to look from one side to the other without moving your neck or back.

CHAIR ADJUSTMENTS

Contrary to popular belief, sitting, which most people believe is relaxing, is hard on the back. Sitting for long periods of time can cause increased pressure on the intervertebral discs — the spongy discs between the vertebrae. Sitting is also hard on the feet and legs. Gravity tends to pool blood in the legs and feet and create a sluggish return to the heart.

The following recommendations can help increase comfort for computer users:

- "Dynamic sitting", don't stay in one static position for extended periods of time.
- When performing daily tasks, alternate between sitting and standing or take small walking breaks throughout the day.
- The chair back should have a lumbar support.
- Adjust height of backrest to support the natural inward curve of the lower back.
- It may be useful to use a rolled towel, lumbar roll or cushion to support the lower back.
- The angle of the back rest is subjective, but the trunk and upper legs should form an angle between 90 to 115 degrees.
- Adjust height of chair so feet rest flat on the floor
 - Sit upright in the chair with the lower back against the backrest and the shoulders touching the backrest.
 - Thighs should be parallel to the floor and knees at about the same level as the hips.
 - Back of knees should not come in direct contact with the edge of the seat pan. There should be 2-4 inches between the edge of the seat and the back of the knee
- Arm rests should be removable and the distance between the arm rests should be adjustable.
 - Adjust height and/or width of armrests so they allow the user to rest arms at their sides and relax/drop their shoulders while keyboarding.
 - Don't use armrests to slouch. Also, chair arms should not noticeably elevate your shoulders or force you to move your arms away from your body to use them.
 - Elbows and lower arms should rest lightly on armrests so as not to cause circulatory or nerve problems.
- Use a footrest when attempts to adjust your chair and the rest of the workstation fail to keep your feet on the ground.
- Ensure that you have some space (2-3") between the top of your thighs and the underside of your workstation.
- Have enough space under your work surface so that you can pull yourself all the way up to the edge of the desk with room for your legs and knees to fit comfortably.

MONITOR

Once the chair and work surface height are properly adjusted, the computer monitor should be placed so the top of the screen is at or just below eye level when seated in an upright position. The following suggestions can help prevent the development of eye strain, neck pain and shoulder fatigue while using your computer workstation:

- Make sure the surface of the viewing screen is clean.
- Adjust brightness and contrast to optimum comfort.
- Position the monitor directly in front of the user to avoid excessive twisting of the neck.
- User must position the monitor at a comfortable viewing distance, approximately 18-30 inches from the user.
- Position monitors at right angles from windows to reduce glare. Close window blinds as needed to reduce glare from sunlight.
- Position monitors away from direct lighting which creates excessive glare or use a glare filter over the monitor to reduce glare.
- Adjust the monitor tilt so that ceiling lights do not reflect on your screen.
- If a document holder is used, it should be placed at approximately the same height as the monitor and at the same distance from the eyes to prevent frequent eye shifts between the monitor screen and reference materials.
- Get regular eye check-ups.
- Adjust as needed for larger screens. You may need to sit farther away and increase the font size to take full advantage of the larger screen.

Bifocal and trifocal wearers have to pay particular attention to the placement of their monitor. Wearers of bifocals and trifocals often unknowingly tilt their heads backwards so they can read the screen through the lower portion of their glasses. This can sometimes lead to neck, shoulder, and back discomfort. Potential solutions include either lowering the computer monitor or purchasing glasses designed specifically for working at the computer.

KEYBOARD

Many ergonomic problems associated with computer workstations occur in the shoulder, elbow, forearm, wrist, and hand. Continuous work on the computer may expose soft tissues in these areas to repetition, awkward postures, and forceful exertions, especially if the workstation is not set up properly.

The following adjustments should be made to your workstation to help prevent the development of an ergonomic problem in the upper extremities:

- First adjust your chair as mentioned above, then with your arms resting comfortably at your side, raise your forearms to form a 90 degree angle with your upper arms.
- Adjust keyboard height so shoulders can relax and allow arms to rest at sides. An articulating keyboard tray is often necessary to accommodate proper height and distance.
- Position the keyboard directly in front and be close to the user to avoid excessive extended reaching.
- Forearms should be parallel to the floor (with approximately 90 degree angles at the elbows).
- Mouse should be placed adjacent to keyboard and at the same height as the keyboard. Avoid extended and elevated reaching for keyboard and mouse. The back of the wrist should be kept flat (in a neutral position). Do not rest your hand on the mouse when you are not using the mouse. Rest hands in your lap when not entering data.
- Do not rest your wrists or hands on a palm or wrist rest when you are keying.

- The slope of the keyboard may need to be adjusted so that it is flat in order that your wrists are straight, and not bent back while you are typing.
- Press the keys gently; do not bang them or hold them down for long periods. Keep your shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers relaxed.

If your work surface is too high and not adjustable, adjust your chair to bring your arms to the proper position. If you raise your chair make sure your feet are properly supported.

MOUSE, TRACKBALL, OR OTHER INPUT DEVICE

The mouse is present in virtually every office environment. Handed versions of mice are designed specifically to the contours of either the right or left hand.

- Placing the mouse, trackball, or other input device too far away, too low, or too much on one side can cause shoulder, wrist, elbow, and forearm discomfort. Placing the input device directly in your immediate reach zone offers natural comfort and maximum hand-to-eye coordination.
- Do not bend your wrist upward. Make sure you are sitting high enough for the workstation to be slightly below elbow height so that your hand rests naturally on the mouse.
- Mousing demands a certain level of surface stability; if used on a keyboard tray, the tray should not wobble or tip.
- A trackball has an exposed ball that you manipulate with your fingers. It requires the use of different muscle and tendon groups than does a mouse, and can add variety to your manipulation of computer information. Some trackball designs, however, may cause discomfort and possible injury to the area around your thumb, which stretches and reaches to maneuver the trackball.
- Test different models of mousing devices, trackball or other input devices. Consider the shape and size of the devices, how comfortably it fits into your hand, ease of operation, and any special features that might make your job easier.

LIGHTING

Lighting not suited to working with a computer is a major contributing factor in visual discomforts including eyestrain, burning or itching eyes, and blurred or double vision.

The lighting in most office environments is too bright for optimal video display terminal (VDT) screen viewing. The illumination may be reduced by removing 2 bulbs in a 4-bulb fluorescent fixture, removing the bulbs in every other fixture, or turning off overhead lights altogether. Supplemental desk lighting is better than overhead lighting for reading or printed copy.

Use the following recommendations to reduce eyestrain and eye fatigue:

- Close drapes/blinds to reduce glare.
- Adjust lighting to avoid glare on your screen (light source should come at a 90 degree angle, with low watt lights rather than high).
- Avoid intense or uneven lighting in your field of vision.
- Place monitor at 90 degree angle to windows (where possible).
- Reduce overhead lighting (where possible).
- Use indirect or shielded lighting where possible.
- Walls should not be painted with a reflective finish.
- Use a glare screen or monitor shield to reduce glare from overhead lighting.

WORK HABITS

Repetitious static work (working at the computer) is very fatiguing on your upper extremities as well as your eyes. It is important that breaks from working at the computer be taken every 20 to 40 minutes in order for your body to rest and recover. Taking a short break (3 to 5 minutes) does not mean you have to stop working, other activities such as talking to a co-worker, making copies, filing, etc. could be done during breaks from typing. It is also important to change positions periodically. Sitting in one position or leaning on your arms for an extended period of time can interfere with circulation.

To help relieve office stress from your body, try incorporating several mild stretching exercises for your eyes, hands, neck, shoulders, and lower back. Do not perform any stretching if advised not to do so from your health care provider. For specific stretching steps that are right for you, consult with your health care provider or see those recommended by the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ohs/PDFFILES/exercises.pdf>.

If you feel that you need special equipment to be more comfortable when working (i.e. incandescent light, wrist rests, document holders, etc.), please discuss your concerns with the OSHA Compliance Officer, so that we can discuss reasonable accommodations.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE POLICIES AND THAT I AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THESE GUIDELINES:

Please sign on Last page.

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