


Safety Services Guidance



Guidance on Homeworking

Key word(s) : Homeworking, risk assessment,

Target audience : Home workers, line managers, DSE assessors, Safety Advisors

Contents

Introduction	2
Responsibilities	2
Guidance.....	2
Training requirements.....	4
Home working self assessment checklist	5

Management cycle	Useful paragraphs
Plan	2-3
Do	4-12
Monitor	5
Review	5

Introduction

1. The University has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and this includes home workers. Home workers are defined as those people who regularly work at home because of formally agreed arrangements with their managers, or are contracted to work at home.

Responsibilities

2. It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out for home workers. Any equipment provided to an employee to use at home remains the responsibility of the University. This might include computers, power packs / re-chargers, etc. The domestic electrical supply is the responsibility of the employee as is any equipment owned by them. Approval to work at home, even occasionally, must be given by the employee's line manager in order for them to be covered by the University's insurance.

Guidance

3. **Management control** - As direct supervision of home workers is not possible, the arrangements for home working must be agreed between the home worker and their supervisor or line manager, and incorporated into the local safety management system. Home working may result in feelings of social isolation so it is particularly important for the mode and frequency of communication to be agreed.
4. **Persons at Risk** - The principal person at risk is the home worker. However, any activity carried out at home may put the home worker's family or visitors at risk. It is anticipated that most of the work carried out at home will be related to the use of information technology, personal computers and associated peripherals (IT equipment).
5. **Hazards** – In some cases, according to the activity, it may be necessary for an overall risk assessment to be carried out in the home. For low risk activities such as the use of IT equipment at home the hazards will be the same as in the normal workplace and they may be assessed and reviewed by the home worker. A simple checklist covering such items as the work environment, maintenance etc must be completed prior to the work commencing and reviewed annually. See [Appendix 1](#). The line manager should keep copies, and act upon any matters of concern.
6. Typical hazards associated with home working will include:

- Manual handling such as loading and unloading goods from vehicles and moving in relatively confined spaces.
 - Electrical hazards. It is the responsibility of the home worker to carry out visual checks of any equipment and check the capacity of domestic power supply to ensure it is adequate for the electrical equipment required. Before equipment is issued from the University, portable appliance checks should be made.
 - Consideration should be given to the provision of Residual Current Devices (RCDs) which may protect the home worker from unsafe equipment and faulty supplies.
 - Regular or prolonged use of IT equipment and office furniture. A Display Screen Assessment (DSE) should be carried out. This can be done by the home worker using the guidance at: <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/dse/>
The assessment must be checked by the School/Institute/Faculty/Directorate's DSE Assessor and any deficiencies resolved.
 - Fire and security
 - Lone workers / social isolation
7. **New and Expectant Mothers** – there is specific legislation relating to new and expectant mothers who work and this applies equally to those who work at home. When assessing risks to the home worker, the line manager must ensure that assessments cover risks to the unborn child and the child of a woman who is still breastfeeding, not just the risks to the mother.
See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf> for information from the HSE, and <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=11521> for the University's own guidance for new and expectant mothers
8. **First Aid** - the home worker must ensure that there are adequate first aid supplies available. Advice is available from Mrs Janet Makin, janet.makin@manchester.ac.uk
9. **Accident and incident reporting** - home workers should be advised to use the University reporting forms and systems for any work-related accident or injury and to send completed forms to their manager, and to Safety Services. The form is at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=10017>
10. **Safety Representatives** - Safety Representatives appointed by a recognised trade union can represent home workers in consultations with employers about health and safety matter
11. **Record Keeping** - Records should be kept of

- All risk assessments
- Work equipment supplied to the home worker
- Maintenance and testing of the equipment
- Monitoring arrangements such as completed checklists
- Accidents and incident reports

Training requirements

12. In many situations it is appropriate for the home worker to conduct their own risk assessments, particularly for their own workstations, and to keep these up-to-date. They may also need some information about the visual inspection of electrical equipment and the use of DSE. Further information is available from the Staff Training & Development Unit.

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Appendix

Homeworking self assessment checklist

This form should be completed initially by the home worker and returned to the line manager. Any matters of concern should be resolved before home working commences. The responses should be reviewed annually, and at any time if significant changes occur.

	Yes	No	N/A
1. General			
Have you read and understood the University Guidance on home working?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Fire			
Is the work area tidy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If not can you tidy it now?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are waste materials regularly disposed of to avoid accumulation of combustibles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how you would get out in an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all exit routes clear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a smoke alarm fitted and tested?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Electrical Equipment			
Is the means of switching off equipment readily available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there adequate space around the equipment for access and cooling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the flexible leads in good condition (e.g. free from cuts, fraying and damage etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the flexible leads positioned where they cannot easily be damaged or cause a trip hazard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the socket outlet in good condition? (e.g. not cracked or damaged or showing any signs of overheating etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the equipment switch on and off properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is all equipment (including any AC to DC adaptors and AC adaptors) in good condition? (e.g. not damaged, no loose or missing casings etc) and free from signs of overheating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the cables securely fixed in all plugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the correct value fuses fitted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. DSE			
Have you carried out a DSE workstation assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Slips, trips and falls			
Are floor coverings sound and without defects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are walkways and the workstation area clear of any tripping hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Manual handling			
Do you have to carry out any manual handling activities that cause you difficulties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Working Alone

Have you read the University Arrangements Chapter and Guidance on Lone Working?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you agreed a mode and frequency of communication with your supervisor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Accidents and First aid

Are you familiar with accident/incident reporting procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. Security

Can exit doors and accessible windows be secured?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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To be completed by home worker / line manager as appropriate.

List any matters of concern which need attention before homeworking starts:

Home worker's name:	Date:
Home worker's signature	
The matters of concern raised above have been addressed and home working is agreed.	
Line manager's (name):	Date:
Line manager's signature	