

PROVISION OF EYE AND EYESIGHT TESTS

Display Screen Equipment at Work Approved Code of Practice Health and Safety at Work (Jersey) Law 1989

Introduction

Current medical evidence shows that using display screen equipment is not associated with permanent damage to eyes or eyesight; nor does it make existing defects worse. However, some users may experience temporary visual fatigue leading to a range of symptoms such as:

- blurred vision
- sore eyes
- headaches

Users with pre-existing vision defects may become more aware of them when working with DSE and if left uncorrected can make their work more tiring or stressful.

The Display Screen Equipment at Work Approved Code of Practice (DSE ACoP) requires employers to provide employees, who have been identified as 'users' *, with an appropriate eye and eyesight test upon request. This includes a test of vision and an examination of the eye and must be carried out by a registered ophthalmic optician or a suitably qualified doctor.

*** The definition of a 'user' is contained within the DSE ACoP and employers of persons who use DSE are required to determine whether they are a 'user' or not.**

Purpose of the test

The test determines whether the user has any sight defect which requires correction when working with display screen equipment. During the eye test, users will need to be able to describe their display screen and working environment, particularly the distance at which they view the screen.

Arrangements for testing

Employers must set up a system for providing users with appropriate eye and eyesight tests and may find the following points helpful:

- contact a number of opticians and ask what they charge for tests and basic glasses for work with display screen equipment
- ask for standard information about each user tested, such as whether they need glasses for DSE work and when they should be re-tested
- tell users what arrangements have been made
- make sure users understand what employers will and won't pay for, for example glasses not required for DSE work, designer frames etc.

Although employers must provide an appropriate eye and eyesight test upon request from a user, there are several different approaches they may choose to take, which include the following:

Vision Screening

Some employers offer their employees vision screening tests, which are used as a means of identifying individuals with defective vision who then need to undergo a full sight test. Employees are not obliged to take part in the screening and may even choose to exercise their entitlement from the outset and request a full DSE sight test.

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Nominated Optician

Employers can nominate a particular optician to carry out an appropriate eye and eyesight test for their employees who request one. The employee is obliged to use this optician and the employer will pay for the test.

Employee's own Optician

Employers may allow employees to be tested by their own optician and will then refund the employee on presentation of the bill. The employer is ONLY required to pay for tests which are performed with the specific purpose of determining whether correction is required for use of display screen equipment.

Provision of glasses

Where it is identified that an employee requires glasses specifically for working with DSE, the employer must pay the cost of a basic pair of frames and lenses. Some employers may allow the glasses to be upgraded but this will be at the employee's expense.

Where users require spectacles for a number of purposes which includes the use of display screen equipment, employers need only contribute the costs attributable to the requirements of the display screen equipment involved.

Requirements for re-testing

The frequency of repeat testing varies between individuals and is dependent on factors such as age. The qualified person carrying out the test should determine how often testing is required. Any examination or correction of vision defects required within this period, which are not related to display screen work, are the responsibility of the individual and not the employer.

Further information

The Display Screen Equipment at Work Approved Code of Practice requires employers to make arrangements for managing the risks associated with the use of display screen equipment. The provision of eye and eyesight tests is only one part of this process.

For further information or a copy of the DSE ACoP, contact the Health and Safety Inspectorate, Maritime House, Route du Port Elizabeth, St. Helier

Tel: 447300 or email: hsi@gov.je

The DSE ACoP can also be viewed on the website www.gov.je/hsi