

Workplace Hazards in Information Technology

This fact sheet is for school students undertaking workplacement programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, that cannot be appropriately managed, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Powered and non-powered tools	Electrocution or electric shock Cuts, lacerations	Students must NOT operate powered tools	Students must NOT operate powered tools
Working in roof spaces (such as false ceilings)	Falls from heights	Students must NOT work at heights where there is any risk of a fall	Students must NOT work at heights where there is any risk of a fall
Electrical capacitors, electrical supply	Electrocution or electric shock	Students must NOT undertake any task which may place them at risk from electrical sources	Students must NOT undertake any task which may place them at risk from electrical sources
Dangerous Goods (e.g. natural gas)	Contact with dangerous goods could harm operator's health Explosion could result to physical injury and damage to property and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess the work area before work begins ◆ Provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the relevant dangerous goods ◆ Document and communicate emergency procedures ◆ Obtain relevant first aid kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Know the dangerous goods and hazardous substances you could be exposed to ◆ If you are in any doubt, seek advice before commencing a task
Poor lighting Glare	Eye strain and irritation, fatigue, watering eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Re-design poorly-lit workstations ◆ Provide shades and task lamps where practicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concern about your workstation lighting
Indoor air pollutants	Respiratory ailments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Locate photocopiers in well ventilated areas and provide appropriate local exhaust ventilation ◆ Provide appropriate air conditioning system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately
Incorrectly-designed workstations	Musculoskeletal disorders, including Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) – chronic soft tissue injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess workstation layout to minimise soft tissue injuries – redesign may be required ◆ Adjust workstation to fit operator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adjust your workstation to suit your individual characteristics – seek assistance if necessary
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, awkward posture)	Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Schedule regular breaks ◆ Use mechanical aids where practicable ◆ Encourage team lifting where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use mechanical aids provided ◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately

Note: This document is a guide only, as each workplace will have its own individual hazards.