Health and Safety Issues

Health Issues

If we use a computer for many hours (as people often do at work), there are some health issues that might affect us.

Eye-Strain

- One health issue that can occur after using computers for a long time is eye-strain (tiredness of the eyes).
- This is caused by looking at a monitor which is a constant distance away. The muscles that focus your eyes do not move, and so get tired and painful. Eye-strain can also cause headaches.

Solution:

- Look away from the monitor at regular intervals – re-focus on distant or close objects to exercise the muscles in the eye.
- Take regular breaks.
- Use an anti-glare filter in front of the monitor to cut down on screen reflections that can also tire the eyes.

Back and Neck Ache

- Many people suffer from back and neck pain after working at a computer for a long time. This is usually due to them having a bad sitting posture.

Solution:

- Use an adjustable, ergonomic chair, and take the time to set it up properly.
- The computer keyboard and monitor should be at the correct height for the seated person (keyboard lower than the elbow, top of monitor at eye level).
- Take regular breaks: get up, walk around, stretch your muscles

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) in Wrists and Hands

- Any repetitive movement (same movement over and over again) can result in a health problem called repetitive strain injury (RSI).
- In particular, typing and using a mouse for long periods are common causes of RSI in the wrist (it is often called carpal-tunnel syndrome).

Solution:

- Use a wrist-rest to support the wrists while typing and when using the mouse.
- Take regular breaks from typing or using the mouse.

Safety Issues

You wouldn't imagine that using computers could be dangerous, but there are a few situations that can result in accidents.

Trailing Cables

- Computer equipment is often connected to lots of cables: power, network, etc.

- If these cables are lying on the floor, they can cause people to trip over them.

- Solution: Place cables inside cable ducts, or under the carpet / flooring.

Spilt Drinks or Food

- If any liquids are spilt on electrical equipment, such as a computer, it can result in damage to the equipment, or an electric shock to the user.

- Solution: Keep drinks and food away from computers.

Overloaded Power Sockets

- Plugging too many power cables into a socket can result in the socket being overloaded, overheating, and a fire starting.

- Solution: Never plug too many cables into a socket. Always make sure there are fire extinguishers nearby.

Heavy Objects Falling

- Many items of computer equipment are very heavy: CRT monitors, laser printers, etc. Heavy items can cause serious injury if they fall on people.

- Solution: Make sure equipment is placed on strong tables / shelves.