Occupational Health and Safety

All people have a right to a safe working environment. The Occupational Health and safety Act is a way of avoiding possible dangers and managing a return to work for those workers who have been injured.

This unit mentions the ergonomics a lot. The word "Ergonomics" comes from two Greek words "ergon," meaning work, and "nomos" meaning "laws." Today, however, the word is used to describe the process of creating a safe work environment that is made to suit the worker and human body and not the other way around. Ergonomics covers all aspects of a job, from the physical stresses it places on joints, muscles, nerves, tendons, bones and the like, to environmental elements which can affect hearing, vision, and general health.

Physical stressors include repetitive motions such as those caused by typing. Other physical stressors could be tasks involving constant vibration such as using a jackhammer on a work site, or tasks which involve using the back to lift a heavy box of books. Working in awkward positions, such as holding a telephone while trying to hold heavy things with the other arm, can also cause problems. Repetitive motions, vibration, excessive force, and awkward positions are frequently linked to physical health problems; but, the most "Cumulative Trauma Disorders" (CTDs) or "Repetitive Strain Injuries" (RSIs), are caused by repeated motions that would not normally result in pain or discomfort if only carried out once. Carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, tenosynovitis, many back injuries, have been blamed on repetitive motions.

Environmental factors can include such things as air quality or excessive noise. "Sick building syndrome," with its accompanying headaches, congestion, fatigue and even rashes, can result from poor air quality in a building or office. Excessive noise can cause permanent hearing loss. Improper lighting can cause eyestrain and headaches.

Listen to your Body: If your wrists or hands ache after a long day of typing, look at your work area and practices and see if you can work out what may be causing it. Ensure your office furniture is adjusted properly. Adjust monitors to avoid glare. Take frequent breaks from repetitive tasks and do your stretches. By implementing these changes you may be making a long term difference to your health.
Occupational Health and Safety principles and regulations

The training package states that you should:

- should have an understanding of general OH&S principles,
- should have an understanding of current business practices in preparing reports
- be able to provide advice to clients based on vendor requirements, workplace policies and the latest OH&S regulations.

The phrase regulations refers to the law in regards to something. When we speak of OH&S regulations then we are referring the laws on OH&S as set down by parliament.

Sources and Resources

Summary of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001
New South Wales OH&S Regulation website
Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Regulation 2002
Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Regulation 2002
Workers Compensation Regulation 2003

Activity 1

1. Create a Powerpoint presentation in which you summarise general OH&S principles as laid out on the website below and the references above.
2. Explain what happens when a person is injured at work?
3. Create a brochure using Publisher where you outline responsibilities of those in the workplace, ways to avoid overuse injuries in an IT environment (very briefly) and what should happen if an injury occurs.

What are my main occupational health and safety responsibilities?

General ergonomic principles to avoid back, wrist and eye strain

- adjustment of a computer workstation according
The workstation should always, where possible, be adjusted to suit individual needs. Computer desks should be adjustable to allow for adjustment of height of keyboard and monitor. Chairs should be height adjustable to ensure that the body is at an optimal height to help prevent bent wrists leading to things such as carpal tunnel syndrome, eye strain, lower back pains, neck aches and a variety of other problems caused by poorly adjusted and set up work areas.

- **Procedures and exercises for avoiding strain and injury &**

- **incorporation of exercises and breaks into routines**

There are a variety of exercises which our computer operator above can use to help prevent strain injuries. These exercises should be performed regularly. It does not need to be a formal break. Give the eyes several blinks every so often to help prevent dryness and eye strain. Flex the wrists and move the hands around in a circular motion to help prevent strain injuries with the hands. Stand up every so often and walk around for a minute and stretch.

The following website should be a help in understanding this and in answering the following questions.

- **How to sit at a computer**
- **Ergonomics Australia**
- **Safe Computing**

**Activity 2**

1. Draw a picture of an ergonomically arranged workstation. You should also explain which pieces of equipment should be
3 Procedures and exercises for avoiding strain and injury

Some problems and procedures to Avoid Them

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
Cubital Tunnel Syndrome
DeQuervain's Tendonitis

Exercises

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Therapy

Activity 3

1. Briefly explain the following problems Carpal Tunnel syndrome, cubital tunnel syndrome and DeQuervain's Tendonitis
2. How do exercises help prevent these problems

4 Electrical Hazards Associated With Computers and Other Office Equipment

In working with computers there are many potential hazards. Wires can be all over the place, power boards are maxed out with power boards plugged into more power boards and double adapters plugged into double adapters. Cables and power cords can be running right across the floor where people walk and electrical currents are flowing through equipment which needs to be fixed. Where do we start?

Something to avoid

To avoid electrical hazards, you should:

- Always unplug equipment before cleaning or repair.
- Always treat electricity with respect.
- Never use damaged or frayed electrical cords or cords with damaged plugs.
- Inform your supervisor/teacher about any defective cord so it can be replaced.
- If electrical cables pass over where people are walking make sure they are taped down. This should not be a permanent
Never use extension cords as permanent wiring.

Don't overload circuits by using multiple plugs or extension cords.

Make sure all extension cords are unplugged after use.

Never use electrical equipment in a wet or damp environment.

Unplug and tag out of service damaged or malfunctioning equipment so that others do not try to use it and then notify your supervisor.

never pull an electrical cord out by the cable. Always firmly grip the plug and pull it out that way.

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Activity 4

1. Looking at the above list: what do you think the main 5 safety points are and justify your answer.
2. Why should defective electrical equipment need to be tagged?
3. Why shouldn't damaged or frayed cords be used?
4. There are two pieces of equipment on a computer that should never be worked on what are they and why? Hint: One is inside the system box and the other is a peripheral.
5. List and then explain the hazards in image 1
6. List and explain the hazards in image 2
7. List and explain the hazards in image 3

5  
**Accident/Incident Reporting Procedures**

For the workplace

**Activity 5**

1. Describe the accident reporting procedures.
2. Collect a copy of any forms which need to be filled in and write out exactly what happens with the forms.
3. What happens in your workplace if an accident does happen? Your answer includes follow up, back to work plans changes in procedures due to the accident etc...

6  
**Identification and management of hazards associated with a workplace in which Information Technology is used**

For the workplace

**Activity 6**

1. What is a safety audit?
2. How does your workplace carry out safety audits?
3. What happens to the audit afterwards?
4. What are the responsibilities of a company in regards to audits?

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**Resource List**

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