



Homemaker Southwest takes its responsibilities for staff health and safety very seriously, and is keen to minimise risk and maximise safe working. The procedures below are designed to help achieve that, and should be followed closely.

I. REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

1. Staff should follow closely the guidelines set out in the 'Lone Working Policy' and 'Risk Assessment Policy'.
2. Staff should make themselves aware of potential hazards within the workplace, and the risks involved in lone working. They should take all reasonable steps to make sure that they look after their own health and safety as far as possible, and that they contribute towards a safe working environment, by taking simple measures such as keeping the office as clutter-free as possible, making sure drawers are kept closed, and ensuring that phone/computer wires are not trailed across the floor.
3. Staff must take responsibility for reporting any actual or potential risks and hazards within their working environment.
4. Where incidents and accidents do occur, whether within working hours or to or from home, All incidents and accidents must be recorded in Accident book which is retained in the Health and Safety Folder in both the Exeter and Plymouth offices.. All incidents and accidents should be discussed fully with your Line Manager, whose responsibility it is to inform the Deputy/Director by email or telephone immediately and appropriate steps taken to minimise a similar occurrence taking place in the future.
5. Where the incident involves a client (whether or not resulting in an injury) then in addition, this should be recorded separately in the client's file and countersigned by the line manager. A further risk assessment of the situation/client will need to be made, and any changes in the level of risk posed by a client following an incident must be entered on the client's individual file and the database. The client's file will also be updated showing that a new risk assessment has been undertaken.

II. FIRST AID

1. A First Aid kit is kept within both the Exeter and Plymouth offices.
2. A nominated First Aider will be appointed.

3. Where staff are in any doubt as to the serious nature of an injury, they should not hesitate in contacting the Ambulance Service on 999.

III. SICKNESS REPORTING

1. Members of staff should notify their **line manager** as soon as it becomes apparent that they are unable to report for work, if their line manager is unavailable any other manager must be notified, no later than 10.00am on a working day. Staff should consult their GP for any illnesses that cause them concern.
2. All absences of up to 7 days (including weekends) should be recorded on a Self Certification form (copy attached) by the member of staff as soon as they return to work.
3. Any absences of longer than 7 days (including weekends) will require to be certified by a GP, and staff should obtain such a signed form from their doctor. Consecutive Fit Notes will need to be produced for the duration of the absence.
4. Payment during sickness will be made in accordance with contractual arrangements.
5. Where appropriate the line manager should carry out a 'return to work' interview with each member of staff, to check that they are fit to return, that there are no work-related health problems, and that there are no long-term issues which require the organisation's support.
6. When you return to work and you have been absent for 12 weeks or more than you will receive a short re-induction.
7. Where sickness absences are regular, prolonged or cause concern for whatever reason, further procedures may be introduced, such as a request for an independent medical opinion.

IV. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

1. All electrical equipment should be kept in good working order. Any apparent faults should be reported to the Deputy/Director, Line Manager or the Administrative Officer. The suspect equipment should be immediately taken out of use and power removed.
2. All portable equipment will be subject to formal portable appliance testing (PAT) as required.

V. USE OF IT EQUIPMENT *(See additional guidance in para IX. below)*

1. All staff within Homemaker are required to use computer equipment in carrying out their administrative duties.
2. Where staff are looking at a screen for prolonged periods, they should ensure that breaks are taken every hour for five minutes.

3. Where staff believe they have eyesight or other associated issues, Homemaker will accept its responsibilities under the 'Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) 1992 Regulations' as amended. Where, after investigation, it is established that there may be a causal link between the use of display screen equipment and health issues Homemaker will pay for appropriate tests and consider a contribution towards the cost of spectacles (all cases will be considered, however, it is likely that staff who demonstrate that they spend considerable time using display screen equipment will receive priority).

VI. FIRE REGULATIONS

1. Fire instructions are clearly displayed at all premises from which Homemaker operates. All staff must ensure that they are familiar with them and follow them in the event of a fire or alarm.
2. All staff should ensure that traffic routes are clear and that there are no blockages which could delay egress or evacuation of any Homemaker premises.
3. Whenever the fire alarm is activated, staff should immediately leave the building and congregate in the designated areas outside.
4. Staff should familiarise themselves with the fire exits in the office from which they work.
5. Although there are fire extinguishers located within the building, staff should not attempt to deal with fire themselves except where it is clearly isolated and manageable.
6. Staff should dial 999 as soon as they discover a fire on the premises.

VII. MANUAL HANDLING

1. Staff will not be expected to lift heavy objects during the course of their work.
2. If occasionally there is a need to move furniture, stationery, etc, staff should only assist with this where they feel their physical wellbeing will not be put at risk, and should take sensible precautionary measures such as distributing load evenly, bending by the knees and not the back, etc.
3. If at any stage it becomes necessary to include manual handling as part of their job, staff will receive relevant training and information before such requirements are implemented.

VIII. INSURANCE

Homemaker holds policies covering Professional and Public Liability, and Employer's Liability.

IX. WORKING WITH COMPUTERS SAFELY

Correct posture

- Adjust your chair and monitor to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the screen.
- Sit up straight in front of your keyboard and screen.
- Do not sit with your feet or legs crossed. Your feet should be flat on the ground or you should use a footrest. There should be enough space under the desk/table to move your legs freely.

Using the keyboard

- Make sure that the keyboard is tilted, your wrists and fingers should line up directly with your lower arms and not be bent as you type
- Keep a soft touch on the keys - do not hammer at the keyboard when typing and do not overstretch your fingers.
- A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.

Using the mouse

- Keep your mouse within easy reach. Your wrist should be straight - wrists should not be leaning on anything nor leaning to the side.
- Sit close to the desk, support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly.
- Flex your hands and fingers to prevent cramps and aches.
- Take frequent short pauses and take your hand off the mouse and let your mouse arm hang straight down from your shoulder.
- Use alternative keyboard actions so that you are not continually using the mouse.
- Try changing your mouse from right to left-handed use (or vice versa) from time to time.

Avoiding eye and neck strain

- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Avoid long spells of work which can lead to tired eyes and discomfort.
- Adjust your screen angle to avoid reflections and use the blinds/curtains at the windows.
- If you notice an eyesight problem after viewing the screen, have your eyes checked. You may need a pair of glasses for working on your computer.
- Adjust the screen angle to prevent straining your neck. If you continually strain

your neck you will develop discomfort in your shoulders and back.

- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (for example avoid red text on a blue background).
- Take regular breaks - We recommend that no work session should be longer than 90 minutes without a break or change of activity of at least 15 minutes.
- If you have any aches and pains, these should be investigated, and the length of the work session should be reduced to 30 minutes followed by a 5 minute break.

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