

Workplace Hazards in Design Environments

This fact sheet is for secondary school students undertaking work experience 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, students must NOT undertake the activity.**

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
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
Machinery and equipment (scissors, sewing machines, pattern cutters, glue guns)	Cutting injuries from contact with equipment, trapped skin or fingers, burns, electric shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment maintained in good condition and fit for purpose • Suitable ergonomic features eg non slip handles • Correct equipment provided for task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person is fully trained and instructed on use of equipment • Competence in use of equipment established • Appropriate supervision is in place at all times
Poor lighting Glare	Eye strain and irritation, fatigue, watering eyes headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Re-design poorly-lit workstations ◆ Provide shades and task lamps where practicable ◆ Limit time spent working on lightboxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concern about your workstation lighting ◆ Vary activity where possible
Fire: Hot equipment flammable materials and chemicals	Death serious burns breathing problems through smoke inhalation burns through electrical fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identification and storage of materials ◆ detection system tested ◆ evacuation procedures appropriate training and fire extinguishers, role call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Awareness and adhere to emergency procedures ◆ Store materials correctly
Storage of items (shelves, compactors)	Falls from heights when storing / accessing materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide training in safe storage of items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Store material according to your training
Hazardous substances and dangerous goods, including cleaning chemicals, adhesives, printer/ photocopy chemicals	Contact with hazardous substances could cause dermatitis, skin and eye irritation Fumes or vapours could cause respiratory problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide assessments based on Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for substances used in the workplace ◆ Ensure First Aid arrangements are in place ◆ Provide adequate ventilation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Read assessments and MSDS and follow safe working instructions ◆ Use PPE provided to protect you against hazardous substances
Poor house keeping	Slips trips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure work areas are kept tidy and clear ◆ Correct storage and layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instruction and training ◆ Store materials according to training
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 lifts where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use mechanical aids provided ◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required
Noise (including printers, telephones, fax machines, and noise from outside,	Tension, stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Select the quietest equipment if possible ◆ Replace or isolate loud equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately
Poorly maintained heating, ventilation or air conditioning	Thermal discomfort Respiratory ailments Legionnaire's disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure that maintenance/inspection is carried out and documented regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately
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

