

Konektions

WHS for MOP(S) Act employees

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Konekt quarterly Work Health and Safety (WHS) newsletter. The Department of Finance (Finance) is committed to supporting Senators and Members to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) employees. We want this newsletter to be a useful resource for all Senators and Members and MOP(S) Act employees, so to help us in achieving this objective we welcome your feedback. Please submit any comments or suggestions to: OHSassistance@konekt.com.au

Work Health and Safety Update

The use of ergonomic principles is an important tool for reducing the rate of workplace injury.

Many MOP(S) Act employees spend a significant amount of time working in front of a computer and/or laptop, so it is not surprising that the highest number of incidents reported to Finance relate to 'Ergonomics' and specifically, concerns with workstation set-up. Poor workstation set-up can lead to unsafe working practices becoming habits, and may cause body stressing injuries, particularly to the back, neck and shoulders. These types of injuries can be difficult to treat and may lead to chronic pain if not attended to early.

Finance is committed to providing education and resources to ensure that all employees are appropriately set-up at their workstation. When setting up a workstation, the following principles are recommended:

how are you sitting?



Shoulders

Your shoulders should be relaxed at all times.

Backrest

Adjusted correctly, your backrest should support the curve in your lower back.

Seat Height

Your seat height should be adjusted to your individual needs to ensure that your arms are positioned correctly.

Knees

The angle of your knees should be at least at 90°, to ensure that your thighs are not compressed.

Laptop users

If you are using a laptop screen as your primary monitor you should have it set to the appropriate height (shown above) with the aid of a laptop stand and you should always use a separate keyboard.



Monitor

Adjust the monitor so that your vision is level with the centre of the screen and at a comfortable distance – try arm's length.

Arms

Your elbows should be at least 90° and your wrists and forearms level with, or slightly above your desktop or keyboard. Keep your elbows close by your side.

Mouse

If you use a mouse, keep it close to your body. Avoid reaching.

Feet

Flat, slightly apart and supported on the floor. If your feet are not well supported by the floor, use a footrest.



Manual Handling – what is it?

There is a common misconception that the work completed within an office environment does not involve manual handling. However in practice, any task that involves handling an item and/or multiple items is considered as 'manual handling'. Keyboarding and mouse operation are included within the definition of 'manual handling'. As such, ensuring workstation set-up and manual handling techniques are in line with best practice principles will assist in preventing injuries and/or symptoms that can result following repetitive use of these items. In addition, postural breaks and/or stretches will also minimise the chances of injury.

The 'Manual Handling and Ergonomics' training module available through the Konekt E Academy provides key information on workstation set-up. All MOP(S) Act employees are encouraged to undertake this training, which can be accessed by following the prompts on WHS Online Training page on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.

- [Access WHS Online Training](#)

Ergonomic assessments can also be requested through [Konekt Response](#) either on **1300 880 777** or by emailing response@konekt.com.au.

What's New?

The **Bullying, Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Awareness** training module for Senators and Members is now available online through Konekt E Academy, via the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website. The module has been developed for Senators and Members to assist in understanding the relevant laws and policies regarding:

- discrimination and harassment
- sexual harassment
- bullying
- social media and ICT use
- complaint resolution procedures and reporting, and
- individual and vicarious liability.

The training module also includes links to internal policies and optional further reading.

All Senators and Members are encouraged to undertake this training, which can be accessed by following the prompts on WHS Online Training page on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.

- [Access WHS Online Training](#)

The following suite of online modules is also available to all MOP(S) Act employees through the Konekt E Academy, and can be accessed via the process outlined above:

- Manual Handling and Ergonomics

- Bullying Harassment and Workplace Violence
- Safe Travel
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Safety When Working Alone and Outside of the Office

Upcoming Training

A reminder that risk management teleconference training for newly nominated WHS site officers has been scheduled for:

- **22nd August at 1pm** (Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra time)

If you haven't already, please provide an RSVP to Konekt via: OHSassistance@konekt.com.au

Reminder

WHS site officers are advised that their third workplace inspection checklist for the year is due by **30 September 2014** at the very latest. Please submit checklist reports to OHSassistance@konekt.com.au and feel free to also contact Konekt on the same email address with any workplace inspection enquiries.

Please ensure that all work-related incidents are reported to [Konekt Response](#) either on **1300 880 777** or by emailing response@konekt.com.au.

It may also be appropriate to report an incident that occurred outside work if the incident is likely to affect your capacity to perform work.

Remember that incidents could include:

- injuries requiring first aid treatment or medical treatment;
- near misses (incidents that may have resulted in injury, if a mitigating effect, action or system had not been in place);
- time lost (incidents requiring time off work);
- psychological injury (a form of mental injury generally associated with work-related stress); and
- decreased capacity (unable to perform part of, or all of your normal duties, including where the initial cause was not connected with work).

If in doubt, it is best to report!