

7.04 NICS DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) EYE-CARE SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, place a responsibility on Departments, as employers, to provide an eye-care scheme for those staff who use equipment with a display screen.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 Under the legislation, your employer is required to provide the following:

- An appropriate eye or eyesight test to be carried out, on request, by a registered optician, or a registered medical practitioner with suitable qualifications ("optometrist" and "doctor" respectively); See annex 2 for the list of opticians registered in Northern Ireland.
- Further eye or eyesight tests at regular intervals (not specified), unless declined by users;
- Additional eye or eyesight tests at your request if you experience visual difficulties thought to be attributed to the use of display screen equipment; and
- Special corrective lenses/appliances where eye or eyesight testing has demonstrated that such items are required solely and specifically in order to prevent eyesight deterioration and/or the exacerbation of existing eyesight defects or problems on account of involvement in work requiring the use of display screen equipment.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR EYE CARE

1.2.1 The entitlement to eyecare and corrective appliances is restricted to those employees whether permanent or temporary, full or part-time, who are required by the nature of their job to use display screen equipment.

1.2.2 When a second or subsequent sight test (as determined by an optician or doctor and not the employee or employer) indicates that a user's lens prescription needs to be changed, the employer's contribution needs, normally, to cover only the new lenses, and not any additional or replacement frames.

1.2.3 The Regulations provide for sight tests for users at regular intervals, at the expense of the employer. In circumstances where an employee requests an eye test more frequently than once every year the request should be supported by confirmation

from an optician or doctor. Specialist advice may be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

1.3 DEFINITION OF USER

1.3.1 It will generally be appropriate to classify someone as a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) User if most or all of the following criteria apply:

- a. The individual depends on the use of display screen equipment to do their job, as alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results.
- b. The individual has no discretion as to the use or non-use of the display screen equipment. Many staff will have occasional and irregular need to use DSE, largely for the extraction of information, and those members of staff should not be designated as DSE workers.
- c. The individual normally uses display screen equipment for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time.
- d. The individual uses display screen equipment in this way more or less daily.
- e. Fast transfer of information between the user and screen is an important requirement of the job.

1.4 PROVISION OF CORRECTIVE APPLIANCES

1.4.1 Any Display Screen Equipment User is able to request an eye or eyesight test by completing application form DSE 01 (annex 1).

1.4.2 You should complete the application form and pass to your line manager for authorisation. If your Manager confirms that you meet the requirements of the scheme, they will countersign the form and you can then proceed to arrange the eyesight test with an optician of your choice, who can be found on the list of registered opticians (annex 2).

1.4.3 In the event that the manager does not approve your request, they should return the form to you with an explanation. If you are unhappy that the procedures have not been correctly applied, you can pursue the matter through the Grievance Procedure.

1.4.4 At the eyesight examination, the optician will determine if corrective appliances or lenses are required in accordance with the guidelines set out at paragraph 1.2.1. The optician must complete and sign the appropriate form (DSE 01), confirming his/her diagnosis and whether or not 'special' corrective appliances have been prescribed.

1.4.5 Where the eyesight test shows that the Display Screen Equipment User

requires “special” corrective appliances, prescribed to correct vision defects specifically for the display screen work concerned, the cost of a **basic** appliance will be reimbursed by your Department, subject to confirmation of payment i.e. receipts and provision of the fully completed DSE 01 form.

1.4.6 The user should obtain and pay for the corrective appliance and submit their claim to their line manager. The maximum allowances payable **with effect from September 30th 2007** are set out below:

- eye or eyesight test - up to £20
- single vision lenses - up to £40
- bi-focal lenses – up to £60.
- vari-focal lenses – up to £72.50

1.4.7 The Display Screen Equipment User is responsible for any additional costs incurred by choosing more costly appliances, e.g. designer frames or lenses with optional treatments not necessary for the work.

N.B. so-called “VDU Spectacles” and other devices that purport to protect against radiation are not considered “special corrective appliances”.

1.4.8 Employees will be given sufficient time off (subject to their line manager’s prior approval) to attend for an eyesight test and for the subsequent collection of appliances, if prescribed. Users may also claim travelling expenses in accordance with the normal rules.