



City and County of San Francisco

Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

# San Francisco Department of Public Health

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## San Francisco Department of Public Health

### Policy & Procedure Detail\*

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure Title:</b> Ergonomic Computer Workstation Policy (OCS8)	
<b>Category:</b> Workplace Safety	
<b>Effective Date:</b> 11/1/15	<b>Last Reissue/Revision Date:</b> N/A
<b>DPH Unit of Origin:</b> Occupational Safety and Health	
<b>Policy Contact - Employee Name and Title; and/or DPH Division:</b> Vickie Wells, Director of Occupational Safety and Health	
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<b>Distribution:</b> DPH-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>If not DPH-wide, other distribution:</b>

*\*All sections in table required.*

### 1. Purpose of Policy

The policy describes computer workstation furniture and task chair guidelines to be followed by the Department when purchasing, replacing or planning for computer workstation furniture and chairs in order to provide employees with a work environment that promotes health and safety, job satisfaction and excellence in service.

It covers all DPH Divisions and their facilities and applies to computer workstations and task chairs used in office workplaces. Divisions are responsible for ensuring that employees are provided with computer workstations and task chairs that follow the guidelines in this policy. Exceptions to this policy may be allowed due to unique employee or facility requirements.

### 2. Policy

The Computer Workstation Furniture and Task Chair Guidelines outlined here are to be followed when:

- Purchasing new computer workstation furniture and task chairs.
- Retrofitting or remodeling computer workstations in existing or new occupancies.
- Determining if used computer workstation furniture and task chairs from the virtual warehouse, leased space or other source, meets minimum requirements.
- Replacing damaged or broken computer workstation furniture

**The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.**

We shall ~ Assess and research the health of the community ~ Develop and enforce health policy ~ Prevent disease and injury ~  
~ Educate the public and train health care providers ~ Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services ~ Ensure equal access to all ~

- A worksite Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP),<sup>1</sup> Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), Operations, or Facilities review of the workstation determines that the workstation furniture puts an employee at risk for injury.

In addition, when Divisions are planning for the purchase of four or more workstations, the following review and sign-off approvals are required:

- Facilities
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Unit assigned to the Division

Any DPH Division working with a vendor, City Department, Design Firm, Architect or other consultant, for purchase or design of computer workstations and task chairs, will inform the agency of this policy.

Broken or faulty computer workstation and tasks chairs:

- Shall be removed from services and employees shall be provided with functioning equipment in a timely manner.
- Supervisors and Managers will work within their division procedures to repair or replace the equipment and to determine if the equipment is covered under a warranty.
- If an employee is injured as a result of faulty equipment, the Supervisor or Manager shall retain the equipment and report the injury to OSH.

Any exceptions to the furniture and task chair guidelines outlined in this policy requires review and approval by Facilities and OSH staff.

### 3. Definitions

**Ergonomics** is the field of study that seeks to fit the job to the person, rather than the person to the job. This is achieved through the evaluation and design of workplaces, environments, job tasks, equipment, and processes in relationship to human capabilities and interactions in the workplace.

### 4. Procedures

#### Computer Workstation Furniture and Task Chair Guidelines:

##### A. General Criteria for Design and Function of Computer Workstation Furniture and Task Chairs

1. Office computer workstation furniture and task chairs shall meet or exceed the ANSI/HFES 100-2007 Standard, and BIFMA G1-2013 Ergonomics Guideline for Furniture Used in Office Work Spaces Designed for Computer Use.

2. Where specific guidelines outlined in this policy differ from either ANSI/HFES 100-2007 or BIFMA G1-2013, the policy guidelines will be followed.
3. Workstations designed for computer use shall allow for the height and depth adjustment of the monitor, keyboard and mouse to allow employees to work in good postures.
4. The workstation should be designed of sufficient dimensions to support the necessary work tasks and tools required by an employee to perform their assigned job.
5. For all workstation types, nothing above or below the workstation shall prevent the user from working in good postures or impede the work surface height adjustability ranges outlined in this policy.

## **B. Adjustable Computer Workstation Furniture**

1. The computer workstation shall allow for a range of adjustability so that employees of varying sizes can work comfortably no matter where they are assigned. This supports the Departments goals to move people, not furniture, whenever organizational needs require staff moves
2. Computer Workstations will be Seated-only, adjustable for seated postures, or, Seated to Standing, adjustable to allow for seated or standing postures. An Adjustable Keyboard Platform (AKP) may be used at a computer workstation to achieve the desired height range of adjustment.
  - a. Seated-only Adjustable Computer Workstations
    - i. Should be adjustable by the user to allow the worksurface to be adjusted from 22 inches from the floor, to 30 inches from the floor, or higher.
    - ii. Shall adjust easily through the use of a crank, counterbalanced, pneumatic or electronic adjustment mechanism. Pin-height mechanisms are not easily adjusted by the user and shall be avoided, except when other options are not feasible.
    - iii. May use an AKP installed on an adjustable work surface or fixed panel hanging work surface as long as the combination of adjustments of the work surface and a AKP allow for a range of 22" – 30", or greater. When panel hanging work surfaces need to

be adjusted by an installer to provide the keyboard platform height required by a user, the work surface will be adjusted within a timely manner.

- iv. Shall be designed with sufficient height adjustment by means of the chair and work surface to allow the user to place their feet on the floor during seated work. Use of a footrest to provide foot support should only be considered when it is not feasible to provide a range of adjustments of the chair, and work surface, or both, to permit such a posture.
- b. Seated to Standing Adjustable Computer Workstations:
- i. Whenever feasible, for full time employees with primary work tasks requiring computer use, the Department will provide Computer Workstation Furniture that allows the computer work surface to adjust from a sitting to standing height range.
  - ii. Are preferred in work areas where there is intensive computer use and the workstations are expected to be shared by several employees in a typical work day.
  - iii. Shall adjust easily, by the user, to a sit-stand height range, through the use of a counterbalanced, pneumatic or electronic adjustment mechanism. A crank system is not acceptable for a sit to stand table. Preference is for an electronic mechanism whenever feasible.
  - iv. Should adjust to fit the range of seated elbow heights from 22 inches from the floor, up to 48 inches from the floor. A range of 24" to 48", or higher than 48", is also acceptable if the table has an AKP that provides additional range to adjust to 22inches from the floor.
  - v. For workstations with electronic mechanisms, should have the ability for the user to program the preferred sitting and standing heights to allow for easy changes between positions.
  - vi. Shall not have any storage units or other obstacle above or below

- the workstation that will interfere with the workstation adjustment range or the normal placement and height adjustment of a monitor on the workstation.
- vii. Shall maintain a minimum of 1 inch clearance at the sides and rear of an adjustable workstation that adjusts by counterbalanced, pneumatic or electronic adjustment mechanism, and any adjacent work surfaces, walls, partitions, cabinets or any other fixed object, to prevent pinch points that could cause an injury to a person or damage to equipment or furniture.
- c. Adjustable Keyboard Platforms (AKP):
- i. AKPs shall be large enough to allow the mouse and keyboard to be used on the same surface and shall be at least 27 inches wide and 11 inches deep. Single platforms are preferred to platforms with slide-out trays or with mouse platforms that are separate from the main platform.
  - ii. Wrist rests, if provided with the AKP, shall be easily removable by the user.
  - iii. The AKP shall be height adjustable, capable of a negative tilt and hold a stable position when adjusted by the user.
  - iv. There shall be no protrusions, knobs or sharp edges that interfere with the user leg and knee positioning.
  - v. Should be able to fully recess under the work surface when not in use.
  - vi. Shall be specified so that no part of the keyboard platform will be obstructed by adjacent work surfaces, supporting structures, or storage units.
  - vii. Should have a backstop or non-slip surface to prevent keyboard and pointing device from slipping off while in a negative slope.
  - viii. Shall be thin profile (1/4 inch to 3/8 inch).

**C. Computer Workstation Dimensions:**

1. All furniture intended for computer tasks shall have work surface(s) adequate in dimensions to allow all essential equipment to reside on the work surface(s) and also allow the user to perform the normal functions of their job.
  - a. Where feasible, for general office work, if the job tasks require using a computer, telephone, paperwork, and other tools and equipment at the workstation, the work surface should have at least 60" of continuous usable desk surface.
2. The work surface used for primary work tasks should be the larger work surface if more than one work surface is provided. If computer use is the primary work task, then the computer work surface will be the larger of the work surfaces provided.
3. All furniture intended for computer tasks (Seated-only and Seated-to-Standing Adjustable Computer Workstations) must be sufficiently deep so there is adequate distance to comfortably view the monitor screen. Computer work surfaces in office settings shall be at least 30 inches in depth (preferred) or not less than 24 inches in depth if adding an AKP. Some staff may still require the addition of an AKP to a 30 inch depth computer work surface in order to achieve an appropriate viewing distance.
4. Any work surface intended for seated work, shall have a minimum dimension of 24 inches or greater in depth at foot level and 17.3 inches or greater in depth at knee level to allow sufficient room for feet and legs under the worksurface. There should be unobstructed leg cavity width, beneath any seated surface, of at least 32 inches.
5. Shall allow at least 36 inches of unobstructed area from the front edge of the work surface or AKP, to any wall, partition, or other object, to allow a task chair to move easily within the work area.
6. Work surface thickness should be no more than 1.5 inches to allow a maximum of leg space beneath the work surface. Work surfaces should not have drawers, lips, support beams or other projections that exceed a thickness of 1.5 inches within the leg cavity of the workstation.

**D. Clearances, Obstacles and Other Potential Hazards**

1. Wires and cables should be managed to prevent a tripping hazard. Work

surfaces shall have a circular opening, notched edge or other feature to accommodate routing wiring and cabling.

2. Pedestals, storage drawers, furniture legs, panels and supports, shall not interfere with the user's legs, feet or chair position when working at the workstation or moving between adjacent work surfaces.
3. Storage pedestals, if placed under an adjustable computer workstation, must not be so tall as to interfere with the ability of the workstation to adjust to the lowest position.
4. Overhead storage, such as files or shelves, must not interfere with the ability of a height adjustable workstation to adjust to the highest position or restrict the placement of the monitor for user comfort.
5. Treadmills used as part of a computer workstation shall not be allowed.

#### **E. Task Chairs**

1. All employees shall be assigned a chair sized appropriately for their stature.
2. Shall adjust easily by the user.
3. Employees should have access to instruction on how to properly operate the chair.
4. Will be provided for employees who are tall, petite or those who may exceed a chair's recommended weight limit or who have specific medical conditions that fall outside of the chair specifications outlined within ANSI and BIFMA Standards and Guidelines.
5. Shall have an adjustable lumbar support, backrest that reclines, and a seat pan that adjusts for height, tilt and depth.
6. Shall have armrests that adjust for height and width and which can be easily removed if the arm rests are not needed by the user. The armrests shall adjust sufficiently low to provide clearance under the work surface.
7. Shall have casters that are appropriate for the type of flooring at the workstation.
8. Where applicable in Department facilities, shall comply with the upholstered

furniture flammability testing requirements outlined in the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Technical Bulletin 133.

9. Inflatable exercise balls used instead of chairs shall not be allowed.

#### **F. Equipment Selection:**

1. Furniture and equipment selection shall consider the warranty period, and ease of repair and service from the supporting vendor or manufacturer.
2. Vendors who provide adjustable furniture and equipment will include manuals or other written instructions so employees can operate the furniture and equipment properly.

#### **G. Telephone Headsets:**

1. Employees whose work tasks require that they operate a computer while using the telephone, for one or more hours per day, shall be provided with a telephone headset except where use of a speakerphone can be used instead of a headset without disturbing other employees or violating confidentiality.

### **5. References/Attachments**

Applicable regulatory requirements:

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Section 5110, Repetitive Motion Injuries

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Section 3203, Injury and Illness Protection Program

Applicable industry standards:

ANSI/HFES 100-2007 Standard, American National Standard for Human Factors Engineering of Computer Workstations.

BIFMA G1 2013 Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association, Ergonomics Guideline for Furniture Used in Office Work Spaces Designed for Computer Use.

#### **Endnotes**

1. Managers, supervisors, and other designated staff conduct worksite inspections in accordance with the Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP). IIPP inspections include a review of employees' workstations to ensure employees can work safely and that furniture and equipment is in good working condition.