"Any business owner who employs people to operate computers just cannot afford to ignore this important health protection device"

How a Simple, Inexpensive Software Program Could Prevent You From Being Sued For Thousands of Pounds

Dear Business Owner/Manager,

In accordance with Health & Safety legislation it is **your duty** to ensure that all your employees work in a safe environment.

But what exactly is a safe environment and how do you protect your employees from hazards?

In some businesses identifying hazards is quite obvious. For example, if your business is house construction then all employees on site must wear the appropriate head and footwear protection.

If your business is involved in the production of or the handling of toxic chemicals, then obviously employees should be given protective, clothing, gloves, footwear and maybe even respirators.

For some businesses, recognising hazards and ultimately creating a safe environment for your employees is not always this obvious. And what might surprise you is…

… the humble office is fast becoming one of the most dangerous places to work.

Every business has an office and some have many offices. They may be large open-plan or single closed units, but what they all have in common today are… **computers**.

The computer itself is not considered a dangerous piece of equipment, but operating a computer for prolonged periods of time without regular breaks most certainly is.

In recent years, the huge increase in the use of computers has equally resulted in a massive rise in claims for compensation due to RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury).

So what exactly is repetitive strain injury?

RSI is a general term, which refers to a spread of musculoskeletal injuries, which are also known as Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs), Work-Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs) and Occupational Overuse Injuries (OOIs).

These injuries most often occur in the workplace and may cause substantial pain and discomfort for the employee. This in turn can result in much inconvenience for the employer, as time can be lost due to employee's sickness and absence.

Apart from eye strain, blurred and double vision, computer users are prone to numerous physical conditions, which may contribute to RSI including:

- Adhesive Capsulitis (Frozen Shoulder)
- Epicondylitis (Tennis / Golfer's elbow)
- Bursitis
- Ganglion Cyst
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Peritendinitis
- Cervical Spondylosis
- Tendinitis
- Cubital Tunnel Syndrome
- Tenosynovitis
- De Quervain's Syndrome
- Trigger Finger / Thumb
- Dupuytren's Contracture

Repetitive Strain Injury can occur in a variety of places in the body including the neck, shoulders, spine and lower and upper limbs. RSI symptoms include numbness, tingling, sharp or dull pain, weakness or poor grip and sometimes limited movement of the limbs.

The consequence is that the individual will find difficulty in conducting simple routine tasks. This problem can affect their general lifestyle and well-being both at home and at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require that health and safety risks are identified, evaluated, and that appropriate action to avert repetitive strain injury cases is undertaken.

In other words, you as an employer must ensure that you have undertaken a risk assessment concerning the use of computers, and that all possible safety measures have been implemented.

In 1990 the Health & Safety Executive published a booklet entitled "Work Related Upper Limb Disorders - A Guide to Prevention". This guide makes reference to keyboard workers and display screen equipment (DSE), which today directly affects all computer users.

Keyboard Workers: The Relevant Law

The main statute upon which keyboard workers rely in making a compensation claim is the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. Under these regulations, the employer must carry out an analysis of workstations where display screen equipment is used.

The risk assessment carried out must reduce the risk to the lowest extent "reasonably practicable".

The HSE state that the activities of users of display screen equipment must be **periodically interrupted by breaks** and changes of activity.

The Health and Safety Executive also published a guidance document in relation to the 1992 Regulations, stating:

"Soft tissue disorders among keyboard workers have often been associated with high workloads combined with tight deadlines. This variety of factors contributing to display screen work risk requires a risk reduction strategy, which embraces proper equipment, furniture, training, job design and work planning".

The recommendations are that offices should be equipped with ergonomic hardware, such as ergonomic articulating keyboards, monitor arms, footrests, copy holders, ergonomic mice, laptop holders and ergonomic chairs. Such equipment can significantly reduce the risk of RSI.

Surprisingly, less than half of all UK workplaces currently having an ergonomic hardware programme in place. Does yours?

John Allen, Managing Consultant at The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recently said…

"We are shocked that this research indicates that the number of office injuries is on the increase due to companies not taking the right actions in investing in their staff's wellbeing. This issue needs to be addressed and companies should start assessing the risks and investing in ergonomic solutions where they are needed."

There's no doubt that RSI remains a serious issue.

The Health and Safety Executive has suggested that over 500,000 workers in Britain suffer from painful neck or upper limb disorders resulting from work. And recent research has suggested that this figure probably underestimates the full extent of the problem.

The TUC has said that at least one in fifty workers has repetitive strain injury symptoms, such as pain and immobility across several areas of the body including the joints, the nerves and muscles in the fingers to muscles in the neck and back.

Even Microsoft recognises that there is a problem. Their research, based on a poll of over 1,000 office workers, reveals Repetitive Strain Injury cases have soared by more than 30 per cent over the last year alone, which is costing businesses over **£300 million in lost working hours**.

The research also claims that an alarming 68 per cent of those office workers polled suffered from aches and pains such as back ache, shoulder pain and wrist/hand pain as a result of working in cramped or awkward positions, adding that… "those working for smaller companies are most at risk."

Microsoft pins the problems down to a worrying lack of knowledge by employers about the risks of RSI.

If you're to blame you could face a claim!

Employers, due to business priorities can very easily become complacent to the risks and will inevitably be landed with subsequent compensation claims. And it's very unlikely that the company's employee liability insurance policy will meet the claim if the employer is obviously at fault.

Some insurance companies may even refuse to renew policies if claims against the employer appear to be significant.

Today, operating any kind of business without the protection of insurance could prove to be very costly. If your business doesn't have the right insurance cover then YOU, the business owner, will become liable for ALL compensation claims, which could amount to many thousands of pounds.

Injury claims are now big business for law firms and that's partly because there are many employees looking for an easy **compensation payout** for the most minor of injuries. Equally, there are also many eager lawyers looking to line their pockets with easy money. You must have noticed their "no win no fee" marketing campaigns.

Remember! Where there's blame, there's a claim.

A pertinent point to remember is it's very unlikely that an employee would be successful in claiming compensation unless they had lost money due to periods of absence caused by "sickness", or in this case RSI.

Have any of your employees taken time off due to "sickness" recently?

As you are probably aware, employee absence can be a major inconvenience especially at busy times and when tight schedules have to be met.

But, what could turn out to be even more disruptive to your day to day business activities is the consequence of a visit from the Health & Safety Executive. It is their duty to investigate injury claims and take whatever appropriate action they deem necessary.

It's as well to remember that the HSE is a government agency and has the power to enforce legislation. They can issue improvement notices, prohibition notices and even close a business down completely if they have reason to believe that employees are at risk of injury.

The opening statement on the their website clearly states **"Our emphasis is on prevention but, where appropriate, we will come down hard on those that put others at risk, particularly where we find deliberate flouting of the law".**

It's far better to stay on the right side of the law. It is in your interest and that of your business that matters never get as far as warranting a visit from these guys.

So, what can you do to protect yourself against claims and government action?

It's simple! All you have to do is show that you have taken measures to reduce the risk of RSI in the office.

Employees who use computers for long periods can develop aches in the wrists, arms, neck and back. They are also prone to eye strain, so make sure that you have done" everything that is "reasonably possible" to prevent these symptoms occurring.

Here's a quick check list…

✚ Do your computer operators have ergonomic chairs, keyboards and mice?

✚ Do you provide arm supports, wrist rests and document stands?

✚ Do you provide monitor filters for those who might have sensitive eyes?

➕ Do you provide footrests, which can help with posture?

➕ Do you encourage your computer users to take regular breaks?

➕ Have you enlightened your computer users to the dangers of RSI?

If you, as an employer can show that you have taken steps to reduce the possibility of your employees becoming victims of RSI then you have done all you can and you will have nothing to worry about.

Ergonomic chairs, keyboards, mice, monitor filters, footrests and other aids are all readily available from most office suppliers, so there is no problem sourcing these items. But…

The problem is… how do you enforce regular breaks?

We all know it's very easy to become engrossed in your work when sitting at a computer and long periods of time can pass unnoticed. But signs of people stretching and twisting around the office could mean they are not taking the breaks they should.

How often should computer operators take breaks and for how long?

According to guidelines set out by the Health & Safety Executive there is no legal limit but you need to break up long spells of computer work.

They advise that short frequent breaks are much better than longer but less frequent breaks. For example, 5-10 minutes every hour is better than 20 minutes every 2 or 3 hours. It is also recommended that employees be given opportunities to pause from screen work to do other tasks such as filing or photo-copying.

For example, let's say you have a computer operator whose sole job is to input data into the system. This is a tedious and repetitive activity and therefore the work needs to be interupted regularly for short breaks. So you say to the employee that they must take a 5 minute break on the hour every hour, but can you be sure they will?

In another scenario you might have a typist whose sole job is to type out quotations all day long. The temptation here is for the typist to type as many as possible and then take a break, if they remember to.

If it's not possible to allocate changes of activity in an employee's job, as with a call centre operator for example, then you should plan to have rest breaks incorporated into the work routine.

The only way to ensure that employees do take regular breaks is to remind them. Of course it's not practical to do this every hour of every working day so you need a system that will do this for you automatically.

That system is *Heath Guard*.

Health Guard is a specially designed and easy to configure software program that you simply install on your employee's computers. It allows you to enforce regular breaks by locking access to the computer at set time periods. Unable to continue working the employee is encouraged to move away from the computer and take a short rest.

"It's the perfect solution and highly recommended for all office computers"

With *Health Guard*, you could set the software program to lock the computer for 5 minutes every hour. It might be a little irritating for the employee and they might even think that it's a real inconvenience, but you will simply be doing what you as an employer must do by law.

By forcing your employees to take regular short breaks, *Health Guard* is your insurance policy against any claim for RSI. And by installing *Health Guard* on all your business computers, you will have proved conclusively that you have taken serious steps to protect the health of your employees.

Installing and setting up *Health Guard* is a simple and straight-forward task, which anyone with basic computer knowledge can perform. But the real advantage is…

… it could **save you tens of thousands of pounds** in compensation claims, so installing it as soon as poossicle makes really good business sense.

The software comes with easy to understand instructions and email support is included in the price.

How much is peace of mind worth?

If the purchase price of *Health Guard* was £100 per computer it would still be great value and worth every single penny. Especially as it could save you the worry of possible RSI compensation claims and HSE visits.

And whatever the cost, it's a tax deductible business expense…

And let's face it… you don't want to be worrying about health and safety issues. You have enough to worry about just dealing with the daily affairs and smooth running of your business.

Well, the actual price per license is nowhere near as much as you might expect…

It's just…   £9.97

That's right! Just £9.97 per license per computer. It's affordable, It's effective, it's available, it's easy to install… it's an absolute no-brainer!

What's more, you can purchase your software and licenses right now and install **Health Guard** on your computers right away. For your convenience, the software is instantly downloadable.

Plus you get technical support by email should you need it.

And there's more…

We think it's a good idea for business owners and managers to be fully informed about RSI, so we are giving away a great bonus ebook absolutely free with every purchase.

When you purchase a **Health Guard** license we will give you a copy of **"RSI: Don't Hurt While at Work",** a 115 page publication outlining the facts about RSI.

Contents include…

☑ Types of RSI

☑ Early diagnosis

☑ What Role Does The Employer Play In Preventing RSI?

☑ Ergonomically Designed Furniture and Accessories

☑ Preventing RSI

☑ The "Office" Exercise Program

☑ Troubleshooting Potential Problems

It's an invaluable information source and it's yours absolutely free.

Please note: **Health Guard** is **only** available from **Loadmaster Software Ltd** and it's **only** available from this website.

☑ Prove to your staff that you're a caring employer

☑ Show that you have taken precautions to protect your employee's health

☑ Stay on the right side of the HSE and avoid a visit

☑ Rest assured that you won't have to meet any hefty compensation claims

Get **Health Guard** installed on all your computers today. It's very affordable, it's available right now and it's easy to install and set up. And remember! It comes with full operating instructions and with full technical support.

Click on the "Buy Now" button to order your licenses and make RSI one less thing to worry about in your business.

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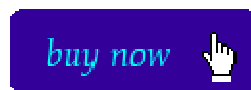
Regards,

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