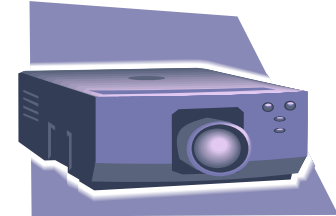




June 2006

To: Heads of all Establishments/Settings
Cc's Governors/Management Committees
Trade Union Safety Representatives
Employee Notice Boards
Intranet



Safe use of Computer Projectors and Interactive Whiteboards

Background

There is currently no legislation that explicitly covers exposure of employees to non-ionising radiation however it is recognised that exposure, for example to sunlight [see [Sun Safety](#)], can cause damage to health and there are recommended exposure limits used as a guide by the HSE. Levels of light emitted by computer projectors, including those used to illuminate interactive whiteboards, can expose the eye to levels above these recommended exposure limits. For this reason the HSE has produced specific advice on the use of interactive whiteboards. That advice and further advice from BECTA and the DfES is summarised here.

What should the Head of Establishment/Setting do?

- Ensure safe installation of equipment
- Provide training, information and advice to operators
- Provide clear instruction to pupils/students/participants

Installation

Wherever possible, projectors should be fixed out of reach of the pupils/ participants, ideally ceiling-mounted. [Safe installation must consider the possibility of asbestos in ceiling tiles – see [Asbestos Safety](#) .] Where fixed equipment is not possible, and there may be a requirement for the equipment to be mobile around the site, it is important to ensure that it can be firmly anchored when in use and that trailing power cables are covered and secured.

A maximum of 1500 ANSI lumens is usually adequate for projection equipment in most classroom environments. Where ambient lighting levels are very high it is advisable to install window blinds rather than increasing the brightness of the projector.

When there is likely to be a person standing in front of the beam, consideration should be given to buying/using a neutral density filter or brightness adjustment facility as a method of reducing brightness. Such modifications can be removed or adjusted if the projector is used, for example, as a cinema projector when no-one will be standing front of the beam.

**Published by: Health and Safety Team, Human Resources
Children, Young People & Families**

The projector should also be positioning to minimise the need for the user to pass through the beam during normal operations as users should never stare directly in to the beam. If an individual is presenting to the rest of the class they should not look towards the projector beam for more than a few seconds. Whiteboards should also be positioned at a comfortable height for use by any person. There will often need to be a compromise between the operator being able to interact with the screen and the audience being able to see the screen from across the classroom.

[BECTA advice: Safe installation of ICT in schools](#)

Training, information and advice to operators

Operators should receive H&S training on the safe use of computer projectors and interactive whiteboards and should establish safe working procedures in the classroom where equipment is being used. The HSE advice to avoid damage to health from non-ionising radiation is as follows:

- Staring directly into the projector beam should be avoided at all times
- Standing facing into the beam should be minimised. Users should try to keep their backs to the beam as much as possible
- Use of a stick or laser pointer to avoid the need of the user to enter the beam is recommended
- Pupils should be adequately supervised when they are asked to point out something on the screen

[HSE advice on the use of interactive whiteboards](#)

- ***Provide clear instruction to pupils/students/participants***

The above advice to operators is also relevant in instructing pupils/students/participants on the safe use of interactive whiteboards. Users should include instructions in their lesson planning and review on a regular basis.

For Further Information and Advice:



Specialists: Health & Safety Training

Tel - **01865 816467**

General: Health & Safety Team

Tel - **01865 816464**

Link to Teachernet website:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/other/projectors/>