

## Brief on working environment and remote working

All health and safety legislation applies in relation to remote working. This means that the requirements of the Working Environment Act apply to the performance of work, the psychological working environment, the use of technical aids and working with substances and materials, etc. However, in the statutory order on working from home there are exceptions to the requirements for the layout of the workplace.

### Workplace Assessment and Well-Being Survey 2021: Focus on working environment and remote working

SDU is on track for being a flexible workplace. Going forward, the focus should be on a good framework for interaction and ergonomics in the home workplace:

- When SDU employees work remotely, the vast majority feel that they have a good framework for their work (93%), that they have the necessary skills (96%) and that they can carry out their tasks in a good and efficient manner (95%).
- A little more challenging is interaction at a distance. The majority still feel that they are involved in discussions about the unit's development and operations and that they receive the necessary knowledge, feedback and sparring from management and colleagues, but around one in five employees experience challenges in this respect, and almost one third feel that they are less or very much less part of the collegial community when they work remotely.
- When it comes to physical conditions, ergonomics – having good and varied postures throughout the working day – is challenging.
- SDU is already a flexible workplace and employees want to increase the flexibility. Virtually everyone wants to combine remote working with on-campus presence.
  - Employees who want to work more remotely are those who feel they can perform their tasks well and efficiently, have the necessary knowledge, feedback and sparring from management and colleagues, are part of a collegial community and have a reasonable work-life balance. The employees who are less inclined to work remotely are those who experience these things to a lesser extent and those who feel lonely in their work more than others.
- Across SDU, the issues that dominate in the APV's (Workplace Assessment) comments in relation to remote working are '*advantage – work-life balance*', '*advantage – opportunity for quiet and contemplation*', '*disadvantage – lack of collegial interaction*'. The analysis of comments thus supports the quantitative results.

Source: Workplace Assessment and Well-Being Survey 2021

### Layout of the workplace

The statutory order on working from home exempts homeworking from the entire chapter of the Working Environment Act that contains requirements relating to the layout of the workplace. However, the statutory order also stipulates that the requirements about screen-based work at workstations (the Computer Screen Order) apply in relation to home working.

## The Computer Screen Order

The Computer Screen Order applies when screen-based work takes place on a regular basis and when the working time corresponds to more than two days of work per week, averaged over one month. This means that you can work remotely for the equivalent of two days a week without being covered by the Computer Screen Order, whereas working remotely for more than two days a week will be covered by the Computer Screen Order – regardless of whether the remote work is carried out at home and/or elsewhere (e.g. another campus).

The Computer Screen Order stipulates requirements about:

- The screen
- Keyboard and mouse
- Work desk
- Work chair
- Lighting conditions
- Interaction between user and display device.

*See Appendix 1: The Computer Screen Order's requirements*

### **A healthy and safe remote working environment is a shared responsibility**

**The employer** is responsible for ensuring that the work – including remote work – can be carried out in full compliance with health and safety standards. The employer cannot agree to waive this responsibility.

**The employee** has a duty to help ensure proper working conditions. Therefore, the employee cannot waive the need for equipment, etc. as prescribed by law.

## Framework agreement about remote working for TAP

Remote working can be organised on an ad hoc or permanent recurring basis. Ad hoc remote working can be agreed between manager and employee. Permanent recurring remote working is covered by the framework agreement on remote working for the State. The agreement applies to civil servants, civil servant-like employees and employees covered by the (joint) collective agreements and organisational agreements of the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Central Federation of State Employees' Organisations. The agreement does not apply to teachers. At SDU, technical-administrative staff are thus covered by the agreement. Academic staff are not covered by the agreement.

There is not necessarily a correspondence between situations in which **health and safety legislation** applies and situations in which the **framework agreement on remote working** applies. The framework agreement on remote working applies when there is permanent recurring remote working, regardless of the frequency and duration of the work, while health and safety legislation applies when employees work remotely more than two days a week, averaged over a month. Thus, health and safety legislation looks at frequency/duration regardless of whether remote working is ad hoc or permanently recurrent.

*See also*

*Indicators for SDU as a flexible workplace for technical-administrative staff*

*Local agreement on recurring remote working and Template for individual agreements about permanent recurring remote working at SDU.*

*[Link to be inserted]*

**Checklist**

- ✓ We have planned and organised the work so that it can be carried out in full safety
- ✓ We have provided training and instruction in carrying out the work in full safety
- ✓ We have ensured that the necessary equipment, etc. is available for carrying out the work
- ✓ We have observed the special screen rules for regular computer-screen work for more than 2 days a week

## Appendix 1: The Computer Screen Order's requirements

**Screen requirements.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules in the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the duty to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to the screen:

The characters on the screen must be clear and sufficiently large.

Brightness and contrast must be easily adjustable and can be set according to external conditions.

The employee must be able to turn and tilt the screen according to their needs. A separate stand for the screen or an adjustable desk can be used to adapt the height to the individual employee.

Glare and annoying reflections on the screen should be avoided, e.g. by placing the screen with its side to the light.

**Keyboard and mouse requirements.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules in the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the duty to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to keyboard and mouse:

Equipment such as mice and keyboards should be designed to enable the employee to use it with the appropriate posture and movements.

The keyboard should be separate from the screen so that the employee can use it with the appropriate posture and movements that do not cause fatigue in the arms and hands.

There should be sufficient space in front of the keyboard and other input and control equipment for the employee to rest their hands and forearms on the desktop.

**Requirements for the work desk.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules of the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the duty to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to the work desk:

The work desk must have a non-reflective surface.

There must be sufficient space on and under the work desk for the employee to have the appropriate posture and movements. Appropriate posture and movements require that the seating and working height of the work desk are arranged to suit the employee who is working at the desk and the tasks being performed.

The desk should be wide and deep enough to allow flexible positioning of the screen, keyboard, documents and other accessories. The depth of the desk should be sufficient to allow the screen to be placed at an appropriate viewing distance and to allow space to rest/support hands and forearms in front of the keyboard.

**Requirements for the work chair.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules in the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the obligation to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to the work chair:

The work chair must be stable and must allow the employee freedom of movement and an appropriate working position.

The height of the chair must be adjustable. The back of the chair should be adjustable in height and should be capable of being tilted.

A good chair allows you to vary the seat angle and depth and adjust the seat and backrest independently.

**Requirements for lighting conditions.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules in the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the duty to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to the lighting conditions:

General lighting and special lighting (work lamps) must provide sufficient illumination and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the surroundings, so as to suit the nature of the work and the employee's vision.

Annoying glare and reflections on the screen or other equipment should be avoided by coordinating the layout of the premises and the screen workstations with the placement of the artificial light sources.

Annoying glare and reflections can be reduced by placing the screen at a distance from the windows and by having the viewing direction parallel to the windows.

Windows should be fitted with an appropriate adjustable screen to reduce the amount of daylight entering the screen workplace.

**Requirements for interaction between the user and the screen.** If the employee's work is covered by the special rules in the Computer Screen Order, you as the employer have the duty to ensure that the following requirements are met in relation to interaction between the user and the screen:

The software and applications used must be easy to use and suitable for the work being performed.

The employer must not use the software to monitor the employee without the employee's knowledge.