Using ESA's Office Ergonomics Hazard Identification Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you and your supervisor identify office based jobs or tasks with design-related hazards that may increase the risk of developing musculoskeletal pain / discomfort, decrease performance and increase an organizations' operational costs.

This checklist identifies whether certain, common hazards exist. It does not assess the level of risk, and this checklist alone should not be used to determine if changes should be implemented.

This checklist should be used with the full participation and input of an employee and their supervisor. When using the checklist one should always:

- Be fully aware of the task(s) that are performed during the day, how long the employee performs the task(s) for and/or how often;
- Ask employees what concerns they have about the design, set-up and organization of their workstation and work areas;
- Consider individual needs based on body size, previous injury, etc.
- Observe tasks being done when practical; and,
- If you are unsure, ask the employee

Unless specified, a **"No"** answer indicates that a situation / hazard exists that should be investigated further and/or corrected.

Computer Equipment Set-up

Chair:	**Yes**	**No**	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the chair equipped with the recommended adjustable design features?			• If not and the following corrective options are not adequate, consider a new chair.
1.1. Does the chair have adequate, adjustable lumbar support?			• Place a rolled up towel or attach a removable back support cushion to existing back support.
1.2. Is the seat pan well-designed (cushion, support, water fall front edge, adjustable depth / not too deep, etc.)?			• Choose a chair with 2-3 fingers width between front edge of chair and back of knees. • Attach a removable back support cushion to existing backrest to shorten seat pan. • Choose a chair with a gently curved front edge on seat pan.
1.3. Can the chair's seat be adjusted in height so the employee can sit comfortably?			• Raise/lower chair to allow feet to rest comfortably fl at on floor. • Use footrest if keyboard/desk height requires an elevated chair.
1.4. Are the casters appropriate for the floor surface?			• Change the casters to appropriate type (rubber for wooden or concrete surface and hard plastic for carpeted surface). • If a carpeted surface and it is difficult to roll the chair's casters, lay down an acrylic mat to reduce friction.
1.5. Are the armrests well designed (not too long, padded, adjustable for height and width, etc.)?			If armrests are too low/too high: • Add padding to bring them up to a comfortable level. • Only use the armrest during short pauses from typing. • Replace with armrests that can be adjusted to the correct height. If armrests are too wide: • Adjust to bring them closer together. • Replace seat pan on chair with a narrower one. • Replace with width-adjustable armrests.
2. Does the employee know how to adjust the chair for optimal fit / comfort?			• Review the chair's adjustability features with the employee and ensure they can demonstrate how to adjust their chair. • Look for an instruction booklet or look to the manufacturer's website for assistance.

Keyboard:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the letter 'H" on the keyboard aligned with the centre of the monitor?			• Reposition the keyboard and/or monitor to achieve this positioning.
2. Is the keyboard positioned so that the employee's wrists are straight (not bent up / down/to the side) while using the keyboard?			• Adjust seat height so that keyboard and mouse are at elbow height. • Raise or lower adjustable work surfaces in systems furniture so that they are just below seated elbow height. • Place keyboard and mouse on articulating keyboard tray and adjust tray height and tilt until wrists are straight. • Retract keyboard feet. • Support arms on armrest when keying or mousing. • Use an appropriately sized keyboard (e.g. external keyboard if laptop is used regularly on desk).
3. Is the keyboard appropriate for the work being performed?			• Determine what keyboard features are requires and replace existing keyboard with an appropriate keyboard.
4. Are all the keys on the keyboard working as they should?			• Get a new keyboard.

Mouse / Pointing Device:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the mouse located close to the employee (so the elbow is close to the body and the hand is as close as possible to the body mid-line)?			• Place mouse/input device beside keyboard at same height. • Use a mouse bridge (i.e. a hard surface that is placed over number pad on keyboard). • Ensure adequate space on either the desk top or a keyboard tray for input devices. • Purchase a shorter keyboard or a keyboard with number pad on left side
2. Can the employee place the mouse on his/her preferred side?			• Purchase a keyboard and mouse platform that permits this positioning.
3. Can the employee use the mouse while keeping the wrist straight (not bent up / down/to the side)?			• Adjust seat height so that keyboard and mouse are at elbow height. • Raise or lower adjustable work surfaces in systems furniture so that they are just below seated elbow height. • Place keyboard and mouse on articulating tray and adjust tray height and tilt until wrists are straight. • Support arms on armrest when keying or mousing. • Use a mouse that fits the employees' hand size and/or places wrist in a more

Mouse / Pointing Device:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
			natural, straight posture.
4. Is there enough space for comfortable mouse use?			• Try increasing mouse speed and enlarging pointer. • Get a wider keyboard platform or a shorter keyboard.

Keyboard Surface:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the surface on which the keyboard sits at an optimal height for keyboarding (e.g. about 2.5 cm (1") below optimal seated elbow height)?			• Adjust seat height so that keyboard and mouse are at elbow height and use a footrest if necessary. • Raise or lower adjustable work surfaces in systems furniture so that they are just below seated elbow height. • Place keyboard and mouse on articulating keyboard tray and adjust tray height and tilt until wrists are straight.
2. Does the surface provide a solid and stable support for the keyboard when keying tasks are being performed?			• If the fasteners for the support or support surface are loose, have them tightened.
3. Is there adequate space for both the keyboard and the mouse on the same surface, at the same height?			• Try increasing mouse speed and enlarging pointer. • Get a wider keyboard platform or a shorter keyboard.
4. Is the keyboard surface adjustable?			• If not, ensure seat height can be adjusted so that keyboard and mouse sit just below elbow height and use a footrest if the employee is no longer seated comfortably.
• If Yes, how is it adjustable:			
- height?			• If not, ensure seat height can be adjusted so that keyboard and mouse sit just below elbow height and use a footrest if the employee is no longer seated comfortably.
- sliding in and out?			• If platform cannot slide all the way under the work surface, have the sliding track reinstalled further back or purchase a shorter adjustable arm.
- angle (flat, ± tilt)?			• Use the feet on the back of the keyboard to make the keyboarding surface flat.
5. Does the keyboard surface have a well-designed palm rest?			• If the employee does not drop their wrists when typing, then no corrective options required. • If the employee does drop their wrists to the work surface or work surface edge, roll up a towel and place it in front of keyboard

Work Postures (seated):	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Can the employee adopt a neutral work posture when seated?			
- feet resting firmly and flat on the floor			• Raise/lower chair to allow feet to rest comfortably flat on floor. • Use footrest if keyboard/desk height requires an elevated chair.
- knees slightly lower than hips			• Adjust chair height so that feet remain flat on floor or footrest but thighs are also parallel to floor.
- sitting with back pressed firmly up against backrest			• Arrange workstation to allow proper back support. (i.e. position keyboard closer to employee, bring monitor closer to employee). • Remove or lower arm rests which may prevent sitting back fully due to contact with front of desk or keyboard tray. • Replace the seat pan if it's too long and doesn't allow for sitting back fully in chair.
- sitting in a slightly reclined posture while working			• Use a footrest if employees' heals come off the floor when reclining chair • Adjust seat pan angle and/or backrest angle to allow reclining and adjust position of keyboard and mouse (i.e. bring closer or lower if on adjustable platform).
- visible space between front edge of seat pan and the back of the knee			• Choose a chair with 2-3 fingers width between front edge of chair and back of knees • Attach a removable back support cushion to existing backrest to shorten seat pan. • Choose a chair with a gently curved front edge on seat pan.
- head/neck relaxed, upright and chin 'in'			• Raise/lower monitor so that eyes are in line with top line of monitor. Monitor may need to be lowered for bifocal wearers if they look at the monitor through the bottom of their lenses. • If using a number of paper documents with computer, use document holder that sits between the employee and the monitor.
- elbows bent at about 90 degrees			• Adjust seat height so that keyboard and mouse are at elbow height and use a footrest if necessary. • Raise or lower adjustable work surfaces in systems furniture so that they are just below seated elbow height. • Place keyboard and mouse on articulating keyboard tray and adjust tray height and tilt until wrists are striaight.
- wrists straight while working			• Adjust seat height so that keyboard and mouse are at elbow height.

Work Postures (seated):	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
			• Raise or lower adjustable work surfaces in systems furniture so that they are just below seated elbow height. • Place keyboard and mouse on articulating keyboard tray and adjust tray height and tilt until wrists are straight. • Retract keyboard feet. • Support arms on armrest when keying or mousing. • Use an appropriately sized keyboard (e.g. external keyboard if laptop is used regularly on desk). • Support arms on armrest when keying or mousing. • Use a mouse that fits the employees' hand size and/or places wrist in a more natural, straight posture.
- Upper arms hanging relaxed at the side of the body			• Adjust armrests down to below elbow height to allow upper arms to hang comfortably • Use a wider, "split" keyboard

Workstation Equipment / Design:

Work Surface / Equipment Layout:	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the height of the work surface appropriate for paper-work (e.g. approx 5 cm (2") above optimal seated elbow height)?			• Raise the seat and use a footrest. • If using adjustable systems furniture, adjust the work surfaces down or up to achieve this positioning. • Use a slanted writing surface.
2. Is there adequate work surface space for all required equipment (phone, calculator, computer equipment, etc.)?			• Determine if less important and less frequently used items are cluttering up the work surface and create space by storing them elsewhere. • If keyboard and mouse are on the work surface, install a platform to create more work surface space.
3. Is there adequate space for non-computer work (reading, paper work, etc.)?			• If a set of drawers are present, can they be removed and their contents stored elsewhere?
4. Is there adequate space for required reference documents, drawings, etc.?			• Can a separate table located nearby be used?
5. Can the employee easily reach the telephone when sitting at all main work areas?			• Move the telephone closer to the employee. • Encourage the employee to stand up when answering the telephone.

Work Surface / Equipment Layout:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
6. Can reference documents/papers be placed in line with the monitor and angled up towards the employees face?			• If using an adjustable keyboard platform, try to position documents between back edge of platform and edge of work surface. • Use an in-line document holder that does not block the monitor.

Leg & Knee Room / Movement:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is there adequate leg and foot space under the work surface?			• Remove materials underneath desk. • Install keyboard tray to increase distance between monitor and desktop and provide more leg room.
2. Is the space under the work surface free of clutter (boxes, papers, shoes, etc.)?			• Remove clutter from underneath desk.
3. Is there adequate space for the knees, to allow for movement and comfortable sitting?			• Remove any obstructions such as drawers that restrict knee space.
4. Can the employee move from one area of the workstation to another easily (e.g. no under-the-work-surface obstructions such as work surface supports, etc.)?			• Purchase a keyboard support with a slimmer profile if current equipment is hitting thighs. • Remove any drawers that are in the way.

Monitor:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Is the monitor positioned directly in front of the employee?			• Position monitor directly in front of employee so that the letter ‘H” on the keyboard is aligned with the centre of the monitor.
2. Is the screen positioned so the employee can just see over the top of the screen while sitting in a relaxed, upright posture?			• Raise/lower monitor so that eyes are in proper positioning. Monitor may need to be lowered further and/or pushed further back and text increased in size for bifocal wearers if they look at the monitor through the bottom of their lenses
3. Is the screen angled up towards the employee’s face?			• Angle the screen upwards.
4. Is the screen free of obvious glare and reflections?			• Prevent source of glare from reaching monitor, (i.e. use opaque vertical blinds, use glare screens). • Place monitor at right angles to windows. • Use an LCD monitor.
5. Is the screen positioned so that the employee can easily see / read the information / icons on the screen?			• Bring the monitor closer to the employee. • In your display’s properties under the

Monitor:	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
			<Appearance> folder tab, Increase the font size to large or extra large. • In your display's properties under the <Settings> folder tab, <Advanced > button, <General> folder tab, increase the DPI to 120.

Work Environment Issues:	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
Lighting			
1. Is the level of lighting considered adequate?			• Use appropriate task lighting. • Reduce the amount of light in work area, especially from ceiling-mounted light fixtures.
2. Is the monitor positioned to minimize glare?			• Prevent source of glare from reaching monitor, (i.e. use opaque vertical blinds, use glare screens). • Place monitor at right angles to windows. • Use LCD monitors.
3. Is monitor's screen free from glare?			
• If No, is the glare from:			
- overhead lighting?			• Reduce the amount of light in work area, especially from ceiling-mounted light fixtures and use task lighting.
- windows?			• Prevent source of glare from reaching monitor, (i.e. use opaque vertical blinds, use glare screens). • Place monitor at right angles to windows. • Use LCD monitors.
- reflected light (off walls, mirrors, etc.)?			• Remove mirrors and cover up areas of high reflectance.
4. Are reference materials (documents, forms, binders etc.) free from glare?			• Reposition light sources if possible to avoid reflections.
5. Can the employee control the illumination level in their work area?			• Remove some light bulbs. • Use appropriate task lighting.
6. Are employees able to control the amount of light entering in through windows?			• Install opaque vertical blinds. • Use a glare screen on monitor. • Orientate workstation so that computer workstation is at 90° to windows.
• If Yes,			
- are blinds vertical rather than horizontal?			• Install opaque vertical blinds.
- Can employees individually control blinds for windows in/near their work area?			• Elongate blind controls if required and if possible

Work Environment Issues:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
Lighting			
7. Is there appropriate and adequate task lighting?			• Use appropriate task lighting
Temperature and Humidity			
1. Does the employee feel that the work area temperature is comfortable (not too hot or too cold)?			• Raise/lower temperature to individual comfort.
2. Does the employee have any control of the work area temperature?			• Wear more/less warm clothing. • Use individual heaters where appropriate.
3. Does the employee feel the area humidity (air dryness) is kept at a comfortable level (especially in the winter)?			

Work Organization/Task Issues:	Yes	No	Corrective Options Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Does the employee do a variety of tasks during a work day?			• Discuss the possibility of increasing task variety with the employer and employee.
2. Is the employee able to vary their posture when they do different tasks during a work day?			• Optimize the workstation and equipment to allow for postural variation.
3. Does the employee take regularly scheduled breaks?			• Encourage employee to take breaks.
4. Is the employee able to take a 5 minute break away from keyboarding at least once an hour (e.g. to stand up / move about)?			• If not, encourage employee to recline in their chair and put their feet up instead.
5. If the employee is required to talk on the phone while also making notes, or accessing information from the computer for 2 hours or more/day cumulatively, is a phone headset provided?			• Use phone's speaker function if appropriate and available.
6. Is an in-line document holder provided for data entry tasks?			• If using an adjustable keyboard platform, try to position documents between back edge of platform and edge of work surface. • Use an in-line document holder that does not block the monitor.
7. If non-standard documents (large books/folders, small invoices, etc.) are used for data entry, is the document holder able to support these documents?			• Use an appropriate in-line document holder that is the right size for the documents.

For these issues, a **"Yes"** answer indicates that concerns exist that should be addressed or investigated further.

Other Issues:	Yes	No	**Corrective Options** Potential steps to reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the MSD hazard.
1. Does this employee have any special needs due to			
- unusual task demands?			
- reduced physical capabilities?			
- on-going pain / discomfort?			
- previous accident / injury?			
2. Does the employee do any heavy lifting during the work day (boxes of paper, etc.)?			• If possible, break these lifting tasks up into several, less frequent tasks. • If carrying heavy boxes is required, ensure a cart is available for transport. • Try to design the task so that heavy items are stored between the knuckles and the chest. • Make sure objects do not exceed 35 lbs.
3. Does the employee have to reach or twist to get at frequently use items (stapler, phone, binders from shelves, files from drawers, etc.)?			• Attempt to have items stored in more convenient locations.
4. Does the employee perform job tasks which, due to the design / layout of their workstation, require them to adopt an awkward posture?			• Determine cause of awkward posture and try to eliminate source (eg. remove drawers that decrease leg space, place keyboard and mouse on work surface if keyboard/mouse platform, when pulled out, causes reaching to access other items.
5. Does this employee experience any significant discomfort or pain which they attribute to their work task or workstation design/layout?			• Get employee to document their discomfort symptoms and what they believe is contributing to the discomfort or pain and what they would do to improve the situation.

Please add any other comments, observations or employee concerns in the space provided below (add extra sheets if necessary):