



PROHAS POST

DSE: THE OVERLOOKED WORKPLACE RISK
PPE CHECKS & REPLACEMENTS
ARE YOUR RISK ASSESSMENTS STILL FIT FOR
PURPOSE?

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Pro Pat Testing, part of Prohas Health and Safety Consultancy, is your trusted provider for Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) across Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire. Our team of fully qualified and experienced PAT testers ensures thorough and reliable service. We guarantee delivery of all documents and test data within 24 hours, and we operate with complete flexibility – no restrictive annual contracts.



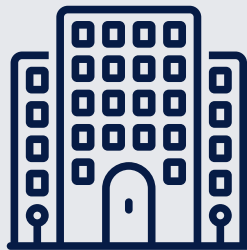
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ARE YOUR RISK ASSESSMENTS STILL FIT FOR PURPOSE?

Risk assessments are the foundation of workplace safety. They are often the very first document created when a business begins taking health and safety seriously and unfortunately, they are often the first to be forgotten.

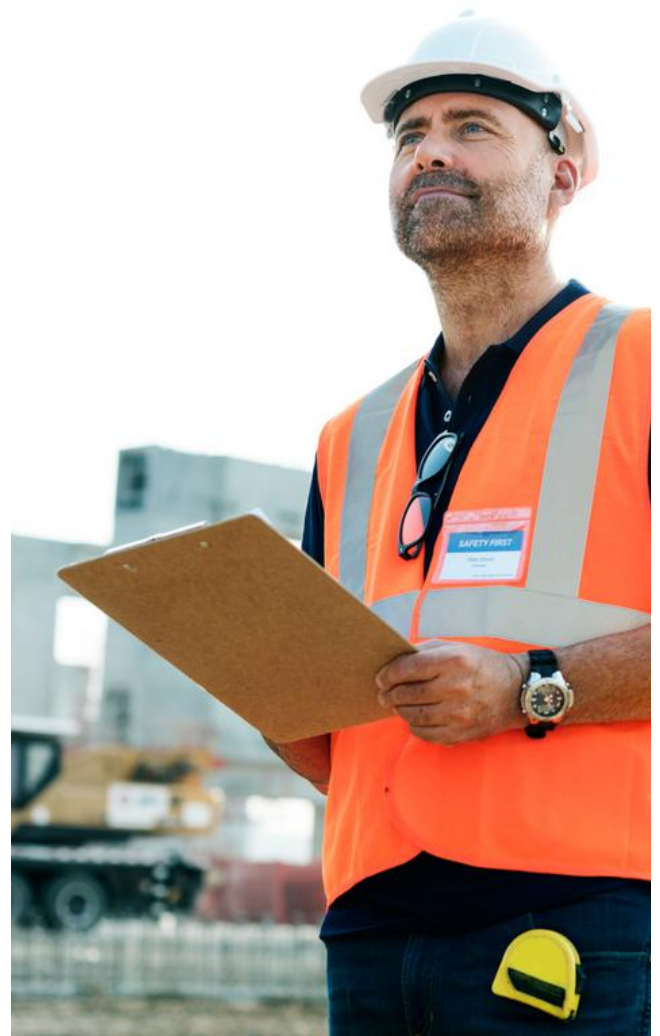
A risk assessment is not something that should sit in a folder untouched for years. It is a living document that must evolve alongside your business. As workplaces change, so do the risks within them. March, with the new financial year approaching, is the perfect time to step back and ask an important question: Are your risk assessments still suitable and sufficient?

Under UK health and safety law, risk assessments must be reviewed if there has been a significant change in the workplace. That could include:

- New equipment or machinery
- Changes in processes or materials
- Alterations to the layout of the premises
- An increase in staff numbers
- New vulnerable workers (young persons, expectant mothers, etc.)
- An accident or near miss

Even if none of these apply, regular reviews are still required to ensure assessments remain relevant. A document written three years ago may not reflect today's operational reality.

One of the most common issues identified during inspections is the use of generic templates. While templates can be a helpful starting point, they rarely capture the specific hazards unique to your site. Inspectors look for evidence that a risk assessment genuinely reflects the work being carried out. If it appears copied and pasted, it can quickly undermine credibility.



ARE YOUR RISK ASSESSMENTS STILL FIT FOR PURPOSE?



RISK ASSESSMENT

Assessment Item: *Investment Project 2023*

	RARE (A)	UNLIKELY (B)	POSSIBLE (C)	LIKELY (D)	ALMOST CERTAIN (E)
CRITICAL (5)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
SERIOUS (4)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY
SIGNIFICANT (3)	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
MODERATE (2)	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
MINOR (1)	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

Another frequent problem is a lack of review evidence. If there's no review date or signature, there's no proof the document has been reconsidered. Risk assessments should clearly show when they were last checked and by whom.

It's also important to remember that risk assessments are not just paperwork exercises. They are designed to prevent harm. When they are outdated, incomplete, or poorly implemented, the consequences can be serious, ranging from enforcement notices and fines to preventable injuries.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should:

- Clearly identify hazards
- Evaluate who may be harmed and how
- Outline practical control measures
- Assign responsibilities
- Be regularly reviewed

Most importantly, it should be understandable and usable by those who rely on it.

A simple spring reset can make a significant difference. Take time this month to walk through your workplace and compare reality with what is written on paper. Are the controls still working? Are they being followed? Have new risks emerged?

At Prohas, we regularly review and update risk assessments for businesses across multiple sectors. Our approach is practical and site-specific, ensuring your documentation reflects how your business truly operates. If you're unsure whether your current risk assessments would stand up to inspection, now is the time to act.



DSE: THE OVERLOOKED WORKPLACE RISK



When people think about workplace hazards, they tend to picture heavy machinery, construction sites, or hazardous chemicals. Rarely do they think about desks, office chairs, or laptop screens. Yet Display Screen Equipment (DSE) remains one of the most underestimated risks in modern workplaces and one of the most common contributors to long-term musculoskeletal issues.



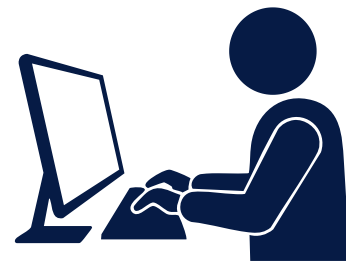
In today's working environment, screens are unavoidable. Whether in offices, schools, construction site cabins, hospitality venues, or home workspaces, employees are spending increasing amounts of time in front of computers and laptops. The risks associated with DSE are not dramatic or immediate, which is precisely why they are often ignored. Instead, they develop gradually, building over time until discomfort becomes chronic injury.

Under UK health and safety law, employers have a legal duty to assess workstations for employees who use DSE daily as a significant part of their role. This includes desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and even smartphones when used extensively for work purposes. The responsibility applies regardless of whether the employee is office-based, hybrid, or fully remote. The location may change, but the duty of care does not.

Poor workstation setup can lead to neck and shoulder strain, lower back pain, wrist discomfort, headaches, and persistent fatigue. Musculoskeletal disorders remain one of the leading causes of workplace absence in the UK. What often begins as mild stiffness or eye strain can escalate into long-term injury if not addressed early. Because these issues develop slowly, they are frequently dismissed as minor aches rather than recognised as preventable workplace risks.

Hybrid working has introduced additional complexity. Many employees now split their time between structured office environments and improvised home workspaces. Kitchen tables, sofas, and coffee tables are rarely designed for prolonged computer use.

DSE: THE OVERLOOKED WORKPLACE RISK



While employers cannot control every detail of an employee's home environment, they are still required to provide guidance, carry out DSE assessments, and take reasonable steps to reduce risk. Assuming that home working removes responsibility is a dangerous misconception.



Fortunately, many DSE risks can be reduced through simple, practical adjustments. Positioning the top of the screen at eye level, keeping the monitor at arm's length, ensuring feet are flat on the floor, and providing proper lumbar support can significantly reduce strain. Using a separate keyboard and mouse when working on a laptop helps maintain a neutral wrist position, and encouraging regular movement breaks prevents prolonged static posture. Even small reminders, such as following the 20-20-20 rule to reduce eye strain, can have meaningful impact.

One reason DSE management is frequently overlooked is that it does not feel "high risk" in the traditional sense. There are no loud noises, visible sparks, or obvious hazards. However, the financial and operational impact of unmanaged DSE risks can be substantial. Increased sickness absence, reduced productivity, potential compensation claims, and employee dissatisfaction all carry measurable consequences. Proactive DSE management is therefore not just a compliance exercise, but a strategic business decision.

Effective DSE management should form part of a broader safety culture. Assessments should be revisited when equipment changes, when employees move roles, or when health concerns arise. Managers should be trained to recognise early signs of discomfort, and employees should feel confident reporting issues before they escalate. DSE assessments should not be a one-off form completed during induction and forgotten; they should be part of an ongoing conversation about workplace wellbeing.

At Prohas, we support businesses with practical DSE assessments, remote working guidance, policy development, and training to ensure compliance and reduce risk. Our approach focuses on realistic solutions tailored to how your teams actually work, whether that is in a traditional office, on-site, or from home.

PPE CHECKS & REPLACEMENTS: WHEN DID YOU LAST INSPECT YOURS?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is often seen as the visible symbol of workplace safety. Hard hats, high-visibility jackets, gloves, goggles, and harnesses send a clear message that protection is in place. But while issuing PPE is an important step, it is only part of the legal requirement. Simply providing equipment is not enough. Employers must ensure that PPE is suitable, properly maintained, correctly fitted, and replaced when necessary.

Over time, PPE naturally degrades. Materials weaken, stitching wears, reflective strips fade, and seals lose their effectiveness. The deterioration is not always obvious. A helmet may appear intact but be compromised by prolonged exposure to sunlight. A harness may show no visible damage yet have internal fibre stress. High-visibility clothing that has been repeatedly washed can lose its reflective properties, reducing visibility in low-light conditions. Hearing protection can warp or compress, reducing the seal that protects against harmful noise levels.



One of the most common issues identified during workplace inspections is the assumption that if equipment looks fine, it must still be effective. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. PPE that is not regularly inspected can create a false sense of security. When employees believe they are protected but the equipment is no longer performing as intended, the risk increases significantly.

Fit is another critical factor that is often overlooked. PPE that does not fit correctly cannot offer full protection. Oversized gloves can reduce dexterity and increase the risk of dropped tools. Loose harnesses can compromise fall protection. Ear defenders worn over hoods or incorrectly positioned helmets may leave dangerous gaps. Employers have a duty to ensure that PPE is suitable for the individual, not simply issued as standard stock. A one-size-fits-all approach rarely works in practice.

Effective PPE management requires more than handing out equipment during induction. It requires structured inspection processes, clear replacement schedules, and documented evidence that checks are being carried out. Employees should understand how to inspect their own PPE before use and feel confident reporting damage or wear. Supervisors should reinforce these expectations and ensure standards are maintained.



PPE CHECKS & REPLACEMENTS: WHEN DID YOU LAST INSPECT YOURS?

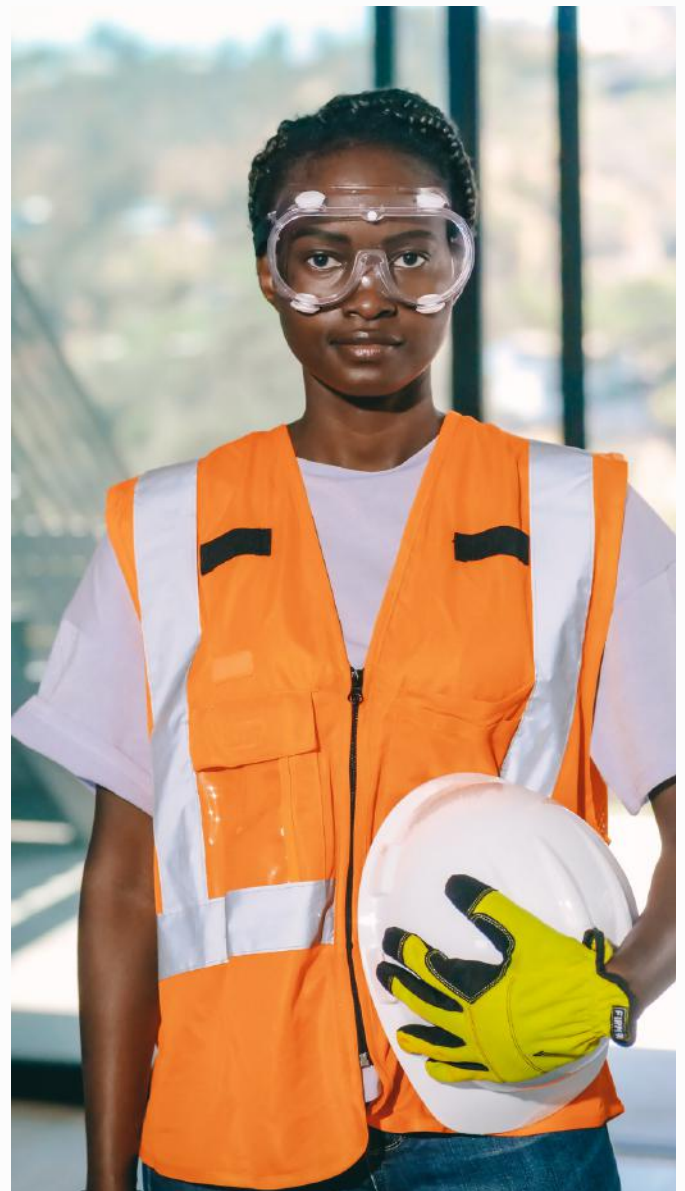
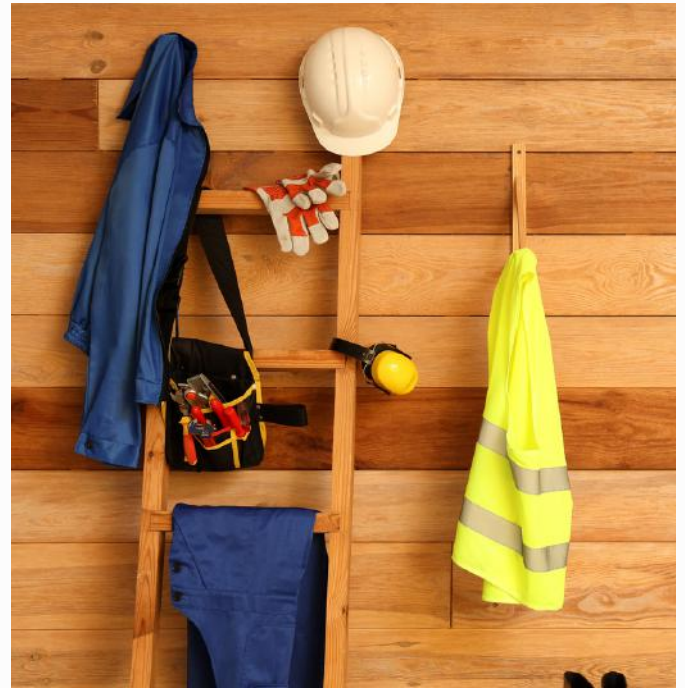
It is also important to remember that PPE sits at the bottom of the hierarchy of control. It is considered the last line of defence. If engineering or administrative controls fail, PPE becomes the final barrier between the worker and injury. That final barrier must be reliable. Poorly maintained or unsuitable PPE undermines the entire safety system.

A practical approach is to conduct seasonal reviews, particularly as working conditions change. A spring inspection, for example, provides an opportunity to check expiry dates on helmets and harnesses, review the condition of high-visibility clothing after winter use, ensure compatibility between equipment, and confirm that stock levels are sufficient for replacements. These reviews also reinforce the importance of safety culture, demonstrating that protective measures are taken seriously.

The cost of neglecting PPE management can be significant. Workplace injuries, enforcement action, fines, increased insurance premiums, and reputational damage are all potential consequences. More importantly, failing to maintain effective PPE can result in preventable harm to employees. Protecting people is not just about compliance; it is about responsibility.

At Prohas, we support businesses with structured PPE audits, on-site inspections, and documentation reviews to ensure compliance with current regulations. Our approach is practical and tailored to the specific risks within your workplace. By helping you implement effective inspection systems and replacement schedules, we ensure that your PPE programme is not only compliant but genuinely protective.

If you have not reviewed your PPE arrangements recently, now is the time to reset. PPE should not simply be present — it should be effective. Regular checks and timely replacements are essential steps in maintaining a safe, compliant, and professional workplace.



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Mental Health First Aid

The course introduces the subject and outlines the benefits of Mental Health first aid and workplace wellness schemes. It then goes on to cover the effects of stress on individuals and teams and discusses how stress and mental health are linked.



Moving and Handling People

The course outlines the dangers and legislation that applies to moving and handling people as well as showing a range of techniques and equipment that can be used. The course also highlights the importance of proper risk assessments and care plans.



Preparing for a Job Interview

The course also covers other things to consider in advance of the interview including planning how you will get there. It briefly covers some of the key differences between online and face to face interviews.



Supervising Mental Health at Work

This course will look at supervising stress and mental health at work and show you how to create a good mental health culture in your workplace. The course starts by examining the negative effects of poor mental health on individuals and also considers the many benefits of mental health interventions by employers.



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- Banksman Training
- Children and Young People's Mental Health
- Depression Awareness
- Managing Occupational Health and Wellbeing
- Mental Health First Aid
- Moving and Handling People
- Preparing for a Job Interview
- Problem-Solving in a Workplace

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