

Washington State Hospital Association Staff Orientation Information



Who we are
and
helpful tips to get off
to a great start

Welcome!

We at the Washington State Hospital Association, Washington Hospital Services, Health Work Force Institute and the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts hope to provide a stimulating work environment, opportunities for personal growth, and job satisfaction. Each employee is provided both tangible and intangible rewards and recognition for dedicated service and for performing well on the job. We recognize that our employees are our most valuable resource. The most common quality among all staff members is the commitment to provide quality service to our members. As a sign of employee satisfaction, many have worked here for more than 15 years – a record few organizations of our size can boast about. We hope you will find your employment with us as rewarding and challenging as your fellow employees have.

About Us:

Washington State Hospital Association, Washington Hospital Services, the Health Work Force Institute and the Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts each have its own mission statement, Board of Directors, and staff.

The most important thing the organizations provide to its members is outstanding customer service. The helpfulness of the voice on the phone, the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided, and the thoroughness with which questions are researched and answered are the “products” upon which our business depends. The high quality of service that our employees bring to these tasks will, as it has in the past, assure our continued leadership in health care.



Mission Statement

The purpose of the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) is to provide advocacy for, and services to, its members.

The Washington State Hospital Association takes a major leadership role in issues that affect delivery, quality, accessibility, affordability, and continuity of health care. It accepts and shares the responsibility for improving the health status of the citizens of Washington State. WSHA works with others in identifying and responding to critical health care issues.

The Washington State Hospital Association, as the primary representative of hospitals and related organizations, plays an intermediary role between these organizations and the legislative and regulatory bodies.

Revised 10/93

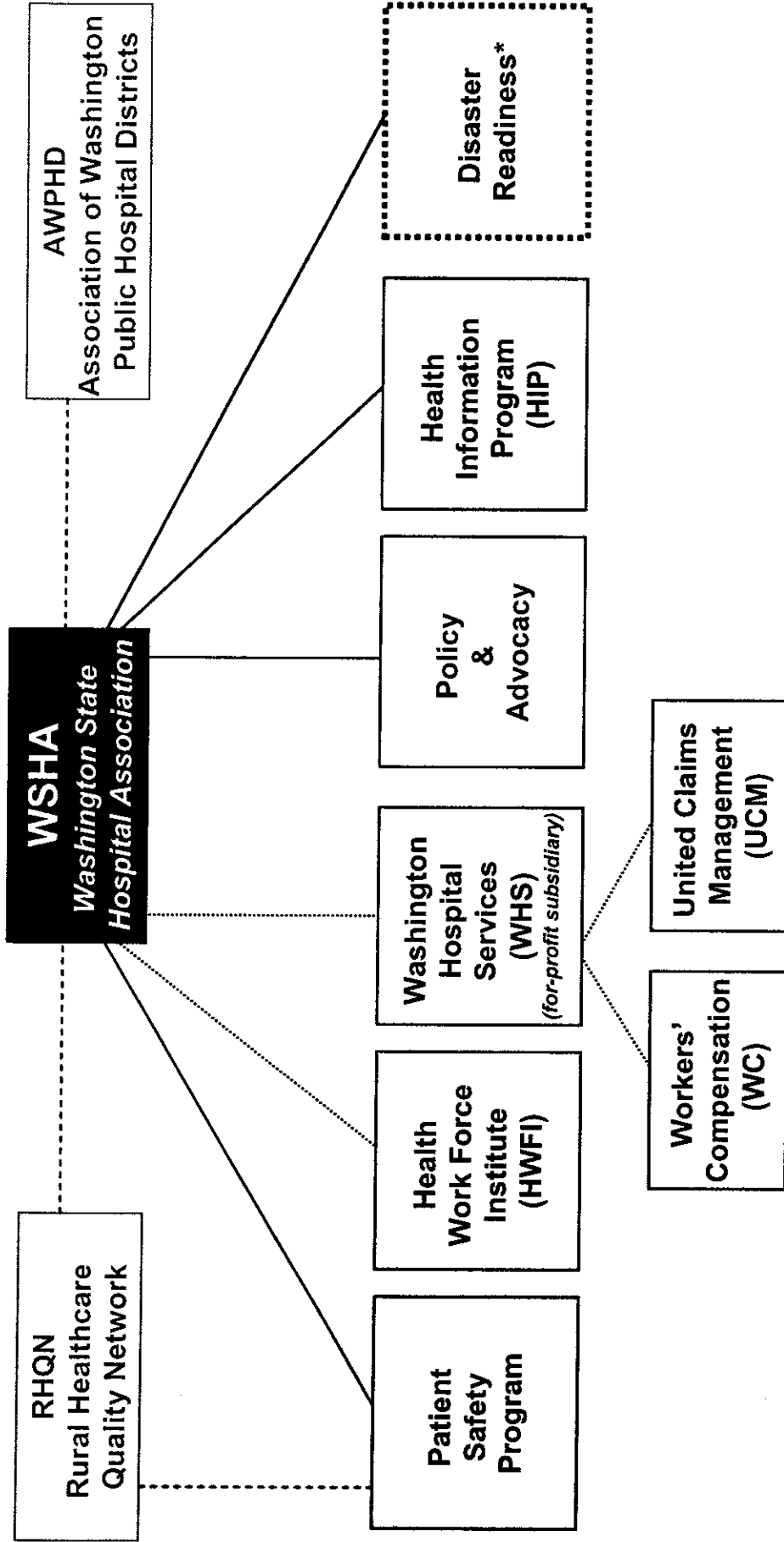
Vision

WSHA will work with others to create a society of healthy communities where:

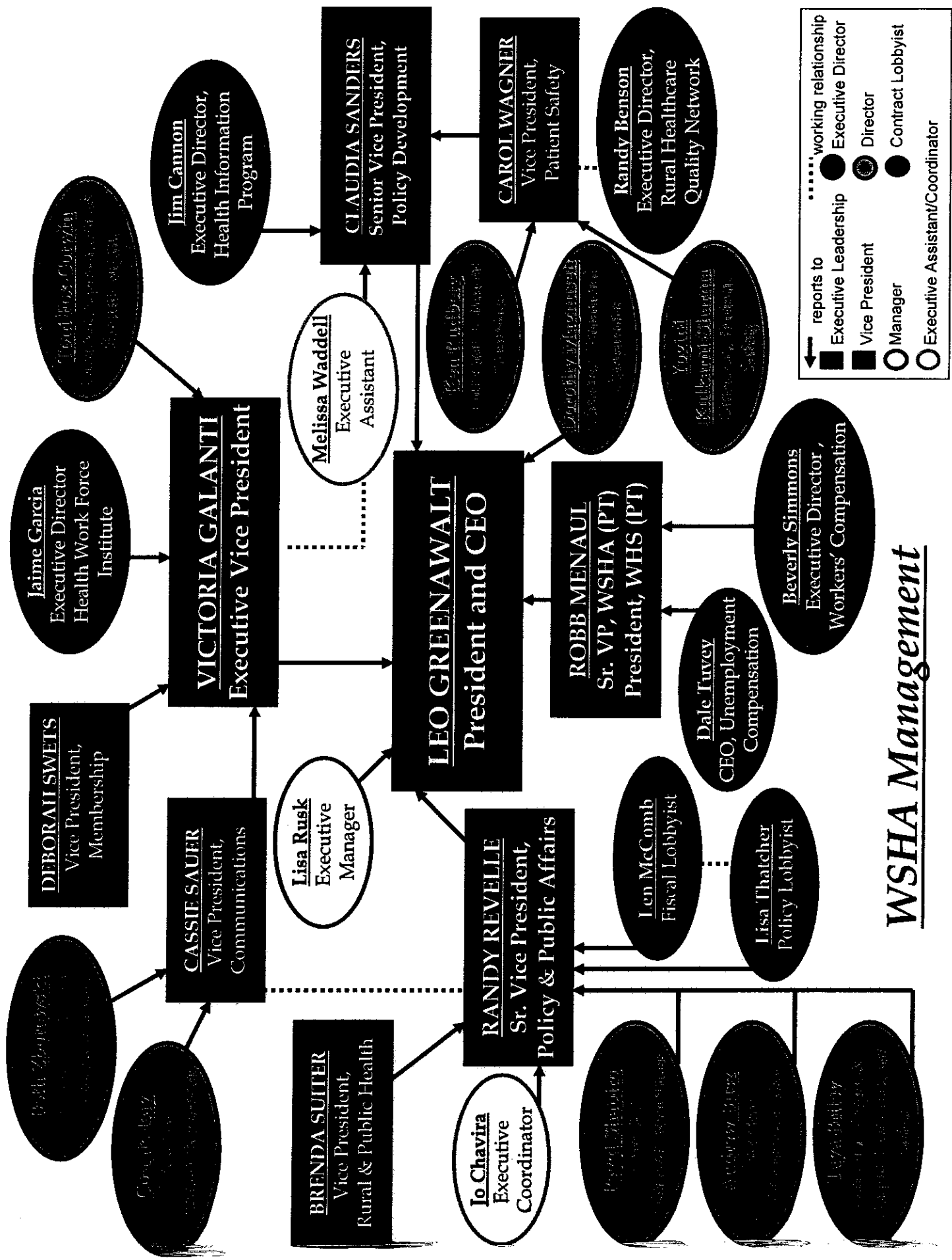
- ♦ All individuals have access to necessary and appropriate health services;
- ♦ Health professionals and hospitals receive the necessary resources to offer the best health care available; and
- ♦ Educational institutions receive sufficient resources to train an adequate supply of health care professionals.

Approved by the
WSHA Board of Trustees
October 11, 2001

WSHA Program Relationships



- - - - - Organization with separate board; separate funding, staff contracted through WSHA
- Organization with separate board; significant funding outside of WSHA
- _____ Primary funding through WSHA
- * \$4 million of homeland security funds pass through WSHA & back out to hospitals



← reports to
 ● Executive Leadership
 ■ Executive Director
 ○ Vice President
 ○ Manager
 ○ Contract Lobbyist
 ○ Executive Assistant/Coordinator
 working relationship

WSHA Management



Washington Hospital Services is a subsidiary service corporation of the Washington State Hospital Association. The corporation is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the shareholders of the corporation. Washington Hospital Services provides services to hospitals and other health care providers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

Washington Hospital Services, Inc. (WHS) serves the health care providers of the Northwest.

WHS's purpose is to provide superior service and value to generate profits that may be returned as dividends to the Washington State Hospital Association as the shareholder of WHS.

WHS continues to develop new programs and services consistent with this mission, and to conduct a detailed analysis of potential vendors to assure user hospitals of the integrity and performance of each selected vendor.

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A subsidiary service
corporation of
Washington State
Hospital Association



Health Work Force Institute

Washington State's health industry employers are experiencing critical shortages of qualified, competent health care workers at the same time the state has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Efforts to create a solution for these two problems are limited by Washington State's significant public policy issues. The education infrastructure is ill prepared to respond to the need to expand capacity to educate more health workers. Currently two-thirds of qualified applicants to health education programs are turned away for lack of capacity.

Faced with this confluence of complex public policy issues, WSHA decided to create the Health Work Force Institute. The Institute is a non-profit entity, incorporated in Washington on October 24, 2003.

Vision

Building Washington's future health work force through sustainable public and private partnerships.

Mission

To improve the health and wellness of Washington State residents by strategically developing a sustainable health work force, partnering to identify needs and developing programs to recruit, develop and retain health workers.

The Institute brings together industry, education, community-based organizations, and work force development organizations to leverage available resources and provide accountability while developing a sustainable health work force. The Institute is focused on these six major goals: Research, Capacity, Diversity, Youth, Retention, and Leadership.



Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

The Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts (AWPHD) has served as the trade association for Washington State's public hospital districts since 1952, first as an unincorporated association and since 1998 as a non-profit corporation. Each member public hospital district is a governmental entity created by state law and governed by a board of publicly-elected commissioners.

The Association's activities can generally be divided into two categories: education and advocacy. The Association provides educational services and opportunities to its members through publications and newsletters, training programs, and a comprehensive legal manual identifying and explaining the legal powers and duties of public hospital districts. The Association's educational activities focus on the unique characteristics of being a governmental entity and improving the delivery and accessibility of health care in hospital district communities. The Association provides members with updates of changes in state and federal law likely to impact public hospital districts.

The Association also provides opportunities for members to expand their capabilities as hospital district administrators and board members by providing a forum for networking with their peers. Networking opportunities permit the administrators and board members to learn from others' experience and promote cooperative activities and affiliations among different public hospital districts.

The Association engages in advocacy in order to promote: (1) increased accessibility to and affordability of health care services; and (2) improved health status of communities throughout Washington State. The Association works to create policy and engages in advocacy on vision-driven issues and topics of special interest to public hospital districts. The Association works to increase the visibility of public hospital districts as health providers and counteract a negative perception of "government."

What is a Public Hospital District (PHD)?

Simply put, hospital districts are community supported governmental entities charged with delivering health care to their communities. They fulfill a vital role in Washington State's health care system because, without them, many people would be unable to receive health care in their own communities. The Washington State legislature granted local communities the ability to create their own hospital districts in 1945. Hospital districts are authorized not only to operate a hospital, but also to deliver any service to help people stay healthy – physically, socially and mentally. Because they're owned and governed by local citizens, hospital districts tailor their services to meet the unique needs of their individual communities. It is this community-based mission that defines and distinguishes hospital districts from other health care entities.

Who's Who On The Floor

Feeling lost already? It is easy to do with 60 plus new faces to attach names to. Check out our website showing who your new co-workers are and their major responsibilities. All computers have access to the Internet. Each company has its own website, www.wsha.org, www.whs.org, www.awphd.org and www.hwfi.org.

We have also included a map of the floor to help you maneuver through the maze. Another helpful way to find someone is each employee's name is located at the entrance of their cubicle or on the window by their door.

Intranet – <http://intra/>

We have created an internal, intranet site to help employees access a variety of information about working here. You will need a password to access it. Contact **Wendy Ray**, ext 2516 or **Connie Ray** (ext. 2511) to get the password. Do check it out and bookmark it. It has been designed to help you find forms, Employee Handbooks, procedures, policies, benefit information, staff names, etc. quickly. The Resource Links is especially helpful connecting you to Map Quest, METRO bus routes, the yellow pages and a reference desk.

Help on the Floor

There are several departments on the floor with which you will need to acquaint yourself. These people are an invaluable source of information to assist you with the every day problems and questions that may arise.

- Human Resources

Connie Ray (ext. 2511) is the Director of Human Resources. All of your personnel records are located in her office. Benefit forms and information, accident reports, retirement summary plans, timesheets, bus pass requests, and employment policies can also be obtained through HR. Connie's door is always open for any personnel issues or benefit questions you may have.

- Key Shared Services Staff

Toni Fox-Corwin (ext. 2518) is the supervisor of Shared Services staff. She also orders computers, laptops, printers, and software for WSHA.

Rich Boucher (ext. 1822) is the person to go to if you want to check out a cell phone, laptop, or proxima. He is also responsible for parking assignments for guests attending all organizations' meetings on the floor.

Rich trains new staff on our email program, Groupwise, and on the use of audio and presentation equipment.

Rich Haynal (ext. 1819) is our Network Administrator. Rich is responsible for the following:

- Network/security issues
- Adding or deleting user to the network
- Ensuring computers have virus protection and windows security updates
- Loading standard desktop software on computer
- Troubleshooting desktop support problems not handled through staff
- Limited support for PDAs.

Technical Desktop Support: Desktop support is provided through **Rich Haynal** (ext. 1819) and **Toni Fox-Corwin** (ext. 2518).

Wendy Ray (ext. 2516) is the Facilities Manager for the floor. She is responsible for the fixtures on the floor. If you need a light bulb changed, repairs to your office or cubicle, call Wendy. She is also responsible for the maintenance of our phone system and employee parking. She assigns parking locations and distributes monthly and/or quarterly parking passes to staff. She also trains provides phone and RightFax trainings to new employees. Wendy also issues the key cards to enter the building on off hours and keys to offices.

Copiers & Printers:

Darcy Fish (ext. 2503) is responsible for maintenance of the printers, copiers, and postage machine on the floor.

Wendy Ray (ext. 2516) troubleshoots problems printing to copiers from your computer and will add additional copiers to your desktop.

- Accounting

The Director of Finance is **Dorothy Magnusen** (ext. 2527). Questions about your paycheck, payroll taxes, and W-4 are handled by **Linda Harmatta** (ext. 1818) and **Nhi Eklund** (ext. 1815). They can also help you with questions about accounts payable or receivables.

- Safety Committee

The Safety Committee meets quarterly to review any accident reports, identify safety issues, develop solutions to safety problems and evaluate the effectiveness of the overall safety program. All members have volunteered to be trained in first aid and CPR.

You will be given a safety handbook outlining procedures for any emergencies that may occur on the floor. It also contains where the first aid and the earthquake preparedness supplies are located. We strongly urge you to read the handbook and keep it at a location on your desk that you can easily access.

In-House Committees and Meetings

There are a variety of on-going staff committees /groups/task forces and meetings that take place here which focus on one or more of the following:

- What is happening in the overall organization;
- What is happening with a specific staff level with WSHA/WHS;
- What is happening with a specific aspect of WSHA/WHS staff work; or
- What is happening with a specific department within WSHA/WHS.

These groups can also involve learning opportunities, work on joint projects to benefit WSHA/WHS, and/or responsibilities for guiding and managing the direction WSHA/WHS staff work takes as we enhance our capacity to grow as professionals and serve our members. Some of the groups/committees/task forces are appointed based on job title and responsibilities and others are made up of volunteers (sometimes with a maximum number of members).

The following list includes all ongoing groups other than individual WSHA/WHS program staff groups. The name in parenthesis indicates the lead.

WSHA Only (this includes AWP/PHD, RHQN and HWFI staff:

Administrative Team Meeting – Quarterly (Jean Engler & Dane Karnick)
Made up of Executive Assistants and Executive Coordinators to work on support issues, coordinate back-up procedures, share experiences and provide training/learning opportunities.

All Staff Meeting – Monthly, usually the second Tuesday from 9:30 – 10:30 am. (Victoria Galanti)

WSHA staff is brought together for general announcements and sharing; specific topic may be addressed.

Emergency Management Team – Quarterly (Connie Ray)
Appointed members charged with keeping emergency and business recovery procedures and policies current.

Executive Team Meeting – Monthly (Victoria Galanti)
Appointed members – Vice Presidents and above. Sets overall policies and direction for the organization.

Political Action Committee (PAC) – (Randy Revelle)
Appointed members work on raising money to fund the political action campaign used to make campaign donations to candidates for public office who are advocates for hospitals and health care. Volunteers are welcome; speak to Randy.

Patient Safety Operations Strategy Meeting – Monthly (Carol Wagner)
Appointed members that include staff working on any patient safety issues to coordinate efforts and understand the latest issues in patient safety.

Planning Committee – Monthly (Victoria Galanti)
Appointed members made up of Department Directors, Executive Directors, and Vice Presidents. Information is shared about what is happening in each department and a topic may be chosen for more in-depth discussion.

Policy/Advocacy Team - Once a month when the legislature is not in session; every Friday during state legislative session (January through March or April) (Randy Revelle)
Determines and guides WSHA's policy and advocacy efforts, with a primary focus on the state legislature.

Retreat Committee – as needed to plan annual retreat (Victoria Galanti)
Volunteer committee that designs and coordinates the yearly retreat agenda and activities. Retreat is usually a full day in November and all WSHA employees are strongly encouraged to attend.

Vice President/Executive Directors Team Meeting – Monthly (Cassie Sauer)
Team building and special projects assigned to or chosen by the second tier of leaders. A subset of the members oversees WSHA's Professional Development Program including approving request for funds for individuals over \$5,000 and for group trainings.

Other committees open to all WSHA/WHS Employees – please ask Connie Ray for more information about how to join.

Diversity University Team – Monthly (Beionka Moore)

Volunteer committee working on creating a respectful and inclusive workplace and a culture that embraces the uniqueness of our employees. The committee provides a bulletin board that highlights a diversity "theme" each month along with promoting diversity events and activities in the area; information on health issues affecting diverse populations, and other information/articles, etc. on multicultural issues. The committee also offers a monthly event which may be a speaker or movie to focus on a diversity topic.

Financial Brown Bag Meetings – varies (Connie Ray)

Presentations over lunch are provided on a variety of topics that offer help and advice dealing with personal financial issues. These have included budgeting, preparing for retirement, and how to improve one's credit standing.

Safety Committee – Quarterly (Wendy Ray)

Two appointed members and staff elected members meet to address any work related accidents that may have happened, update emergency procedures, ensure emergency supplies are stocked and arrange practice drills. All members must become CPR certified.

Supervisors Brown Bag Meeting – nine meetings per year (Connie Ray)

Meetings are arranged by Human Resources to provide training for supervisors to become better managers, to receive updates on employment law issues or organizations' policies and to share experiences.

Retirement Committee – Quarterly (Connie Ray)

Volunteer committee. Committee meets with Wells Fargo Plan Administrator to review the plan investments and help decide if any fund changes or procedures are necessary. It also monitors the plan expenses and ensures WSHA/WHHS is following the plan documents. A committee member must be willing to become a fiduciary of the WSHA/WHHS 401(k) Plan.

Computer Guidelines to Follow

The following computer guidelines need to be followed. If you have questions about them, see **Toni Fox-Corwin** or **Rich Haynal**:

- Log off your computer when you leave for the day; do not shut down.
- Files should be saved on your h: (home-private) drive or the L: (common-not private) drive. The network drives are backed up. Do not save files on your c: (desktop) drive.
- You will be assigned a network password and a GroupWise password on your first day of work. Please be sure to change them from the standard "WSHA".
- It is ok to update/download some standard applications (i.e., RealPlayer, MediaPlayer, QuickTime Player, Adobe Reader).

- Employees are not allowed to install, download or delete software/applications unless approved by Rich Haynal or Toni Fox-Corwin. This includes file sharing applications, some screen savers, and any executable files.
- Do not save personal photos or music onto your computer.
- Do not check personal email accounts.
- Do not use Instant Messaging programs (i.e., AOL, ICQ, etc.)

Use of the Kitchen and Break Area

The Kitchen/Break Area has been provided as a space for all employees on the floor to use, including the outside organizations who sub-let space. Since it is a common area, it is important to remember to be considerate of everyone who uses it. Please clean up after yourself – this includes dirty dishes, left-over food from meetings, tea and sugar packets, cleaning the microwave after using it, not leaving food in the refrigerator until it turns green, etc.

Popcorn is not allowed to be used in the microwave.

Employees are also encouraged to recycle soda cans and use provided plates, cups and silverware instead of paper products.

Occasionally, the sink may become clogged and the ice machine breaks down. Please contact **Wendy Ray**, (ext. 2516) when this occurs.

Holland America provides a cafeteria for its employees on the second floor. They have offered the use of the cafeteria to our employees; however, they do not want us to use the sitting area. We may purchase food, but it needs to be on a take out basis only. You must use your key card to enter the cafeteria.

For Your Information

- Your Benefits

Your salary is just one part of your total compensation package. We include a variety of generous benefits designed to meet the needs of our employees and their families.

Benefits you may be eligible for are:

- Insurance
 - Medical
 - Dental
 - Vision
 - Term Life

- Long Term Disability
- Long Term Care
- 401K Plan
- Flexible Benefit Spending Plan
- 529 College Savings Plan
- Vacation
- Sick Leave
- Holidays
- Parking/Bus or Ferry Pass

The organizations pay all or part of the insurance premiums for the employee based on terms of employment and will share the cost of coverage for all eligible dependents. The Employee Handbook outlines eligibility requirements for these benefits.

The HR Department will assist you with enrollment for these benefits. It is also available for any questions that you may have, beneficiary or dependent changes, and help with processing claims.

- Changes in Personal Information

The HR Department is responsible for maintaining your records, but these records are only as good as the information you provide. Certain changes (see below) may require new application forms or a new W-4 withholding certificate. Since many changes are subject to certain deadlines, any change should be reported as soon as possible so it can be processed in a timely manner.

Please notify HR when any of the following occurs:

- Change of address;
- Change in name;
- Change in marital status;
- Change in insurance beneficiary desired;
- Change in medical information/emergency notification;
- Additions/deletions of eligible dependents; and/or
- Change in income tax exemptions claimed.

- Personnel Records

Personnel records are kept locked in the file cabinet at all times. Each employee has three files, a personnel file (blue folder), a confidential file (red file), and medical information folder. The personnel file contains applications, performance evaluations, references, employee hiring letter, salary information, correspondence and other pertinent information. None of this information contained in the personnel file will be released without the

employee's consent, unless material is subpoenaed or required for legal reasons. The employee may rebut or supplement records he/she believes are not accurate or complete.

The personnel file will be available on a "need to know" basis to authorized persons consistent with state law (Chapter 49.12 RCW). Authorized persons shall be those persons in a direct line of supervision over the individual, the Director of Human Resources, and the individual to whom the file applies.

The confidential file contains information that is restricted. This information is required, but not job-related. The only persons who should have access to the information contained in this file are human resource authorized personnel. Supervisors or safety committee members may have access on a business need-to-know basis. HR personnel will supply only those documents or excerpts from documents that contain required information. The medical folder contains medical records only. Employees are asked to fill out a medical information form during their orientation. This form is optional. A copy of the form is also placed, as a back up, in a file located in the CEO's office. The Safety Committee is aware of the location of this file in case there is an emergency where information from the file is needed.

- Required Trainings

There are two trainings all staff are required to attend: confidentiality and sexual harassment. These trainings may occur during your orientation or scheduled at a later date. Both are held here. HR will contact you when the trainings are to be held. Other training may be held throughout the year and your supervisor will determine if your attendance is required.

Ergonomics Tips for Employees

Ergonomics is concerned with enhancing work performance by removing the barriers that exist in many work places that prevent employees from performing to the best of their abilities. It also reduces the risk of injury by adapting the work to fit the person instead of forcing the person to adapt to the work. Included are several tips from the booklet *Office Ergonomics, Practical Solutions for a Safer Workplace*, written by the State of Washington Department of Labor and Industries.

Ergonomics Tip

Neutral posture at your workstation helps prevent injury

In order to understand the best way to set up a computer workstation, you first need to understand neutral posture. This is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned and your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder is reduced.

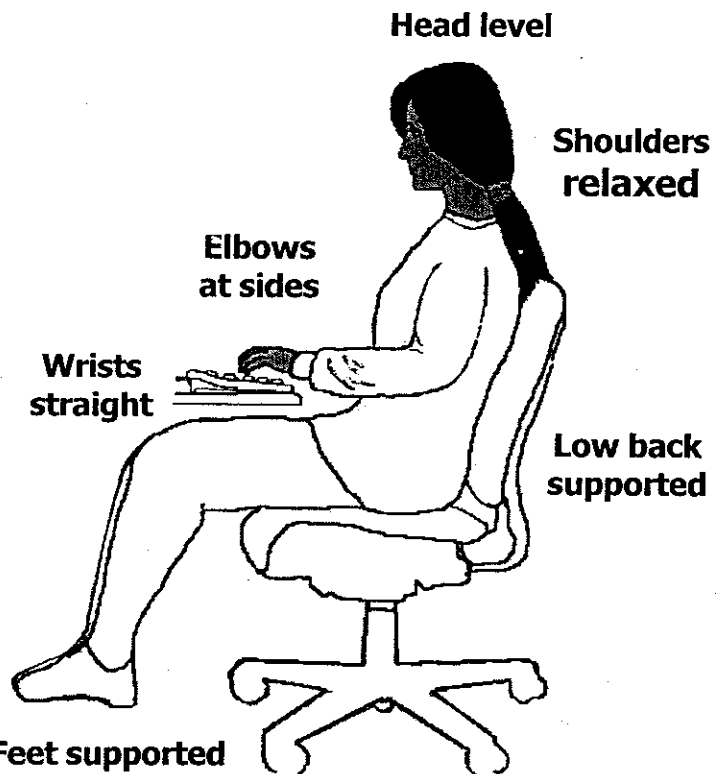
Change postures frequently

Regardless of how good your posture may be, sitting still for long periods of time isn't healthy. You should make small adjustments to your posture about every 15 minutes by changing the height of your chair slightly or leaning back a little further into the backrest. Larger changes in posture are also important. Stand up and stretch or walk around for one or two minutes every hour.

Practice neutral posture while seated

The following are the important components of neutral posture while seated:

1. Keep your head level or tilted slightly downward. Place your work in front of you so that you are looking straight ahead.
2. Sit with your shoulders relaxed, not elevated, hunched or rotated forward.
3. Keep your elbows close to your sides and bent at about a 90° angle, not extended out in front of your body.
4. Use the chair's backrest to support your lower back, or lumbar curve.
5. Sit with your entire upper body upright or leaning slightly back.
6. Keep your wrists straight while you work, not bent up, down or to the side.
7. Sit with your knees at the same level or slightly below the level of your hips. There should be no pressure points along the backs of your thighs or at the backs of your knees.
8. Place your feet slightly out in front of your knees and make sure they are comfortably supported, either by the floor or by a footrest.

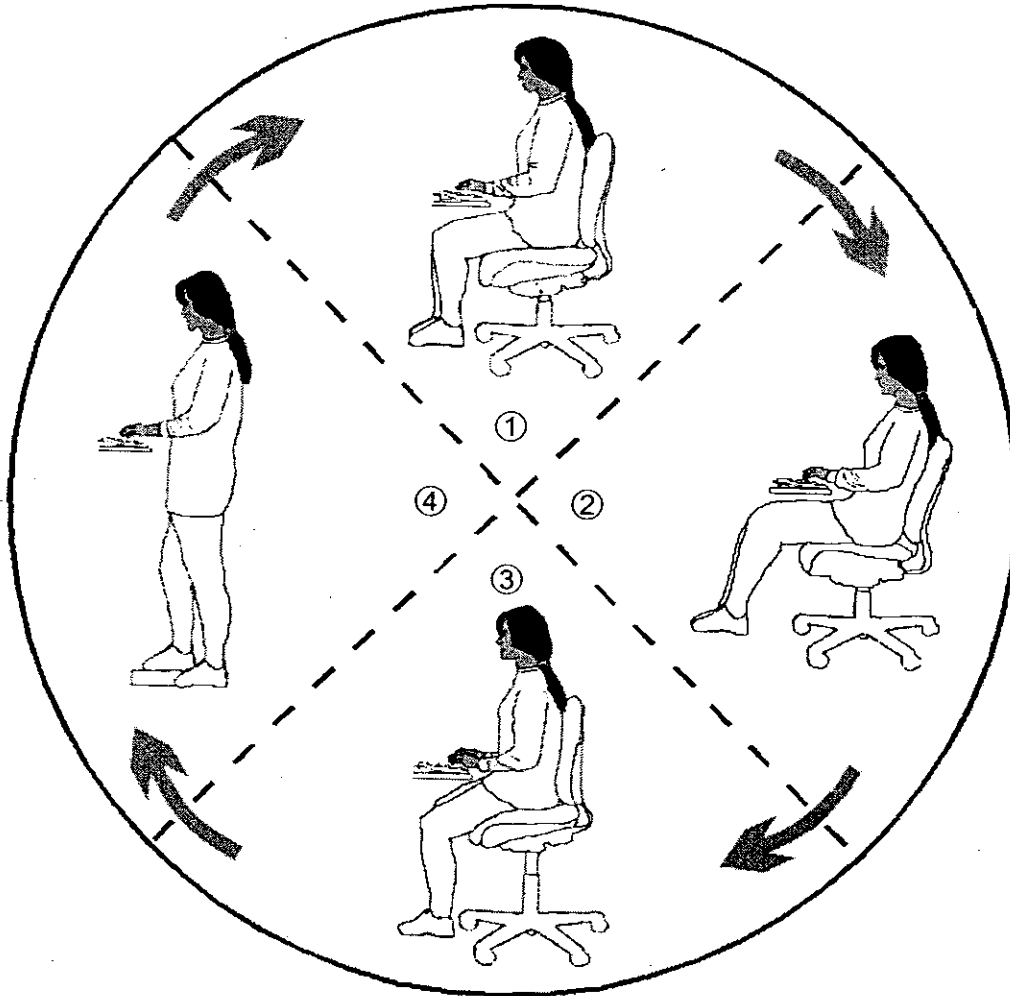


Pay attention to overall posture

Although the components of neutral posture are listed individually above, it is really the posture of your body as a whole that is important. Having just one part of your body out of neutral can affect the rest of your posture. Try sitting with your feet hooked under your chair. You will notice that this tends to pull you forward in your seat, away from your chair's backrest. Now place your feet out in front of you and you will notice that it is much easier to lean back into the chair. Similarly, if you place your monitor too low on your desk, this will also tend to make you lean forward to view it. Practice adjusting your workstation to achieve a neutral posture for your whole body. It may help to have a co-worker take a look at you while you work and give you feedback on your posture.

There is no single "correct" posture

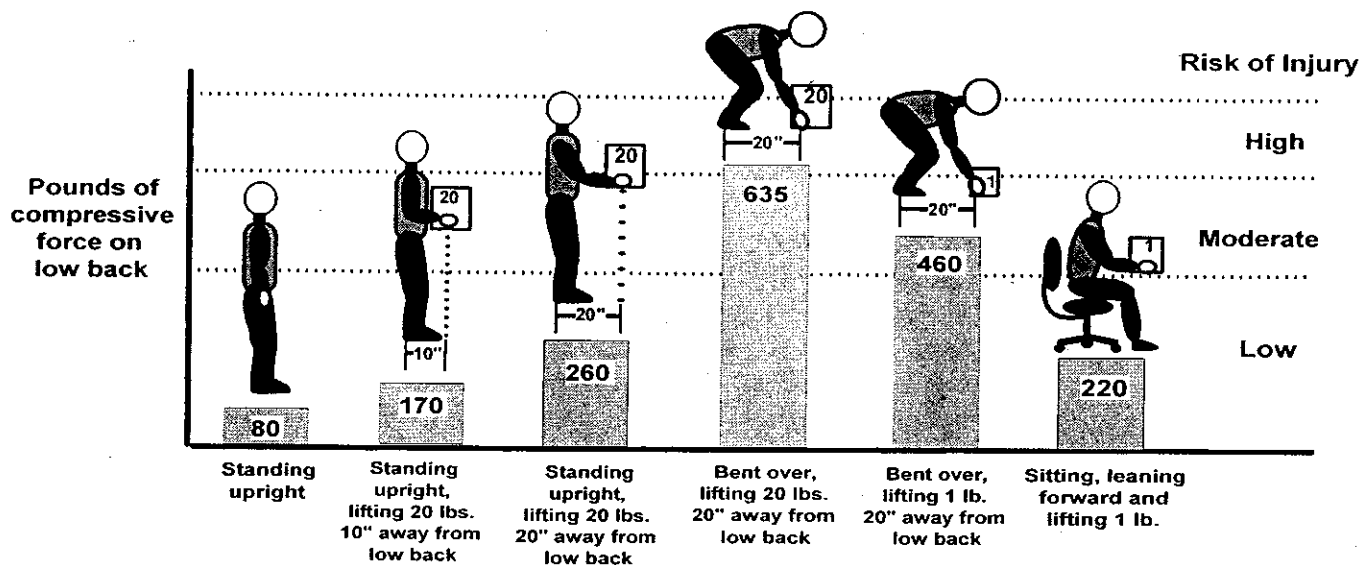
There are many variations of neutral posture, and depending on what tasks you have to perform and the furniture in your workstation, you may find one of these alternatives to be more comfortable for you. These variations are also useful when changing postures throughout the day.



- ① **"90-degree" posture:** Sit upright with your elbows, hips and knees bent at right angles and your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. This position is biomechanically correct, but it can fatigue your back muscles over time. Fatigue can lead to slouching, even on a chair with lumbar support.
- ② **Reclining posture:** Lean back 10° - 20° into the chair's backrest and put your feet out in front of you to open up the angle at your hips and knees. This helps relax your back muscles and promotes blood circulation. Leaning back too far can result in an awkward neck posture when trying to keep your head upright.
- ③ **Forward tilt posture:** Raise the height of your chair's seat a few inches and tilt the front of it downward about 8° . This will open up your hip angle and allow you to support some of your weight using your legs rather than having it all rest on your hips and the backs of your thighs. You may not find this posture comfortable if you have knee or foot problems, or if you feel like you are sliding off the front of the seat. A contoured chair seat can help to hold you in place.
- ④ **Standing posture:** Standing provides the biggest change in posture, and is a good alternative to prolonged sitting, which can aggravate low back injuries. It can be fatiguing however, so have a counter height chair available at standing workstations or use a height adjustable sit/stand workstation. Also, prop one foot up on a low footrest occasionally to help shift your weight.

Your lifting posture affects your risk of injury

The weight of the objects you lift is an important factor in determining your risk of injury, and you will want to be especially careful when lifting heavy items such as storage boxes full of files and cases of copy paper. However, weight is not the only thing that determines your risk of injury. The figure below shows the effect that posture can have when combined with lifting different size loads:



Force estimates based on the Michigan 2-D Static Strength Model

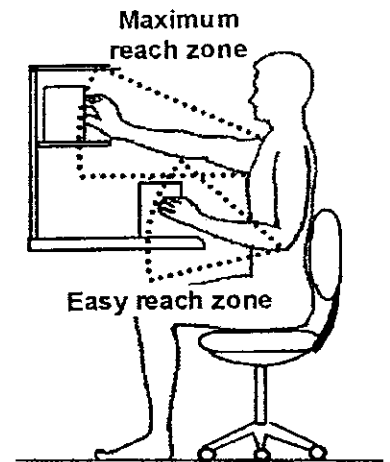
Remember the following when lifting:

- 1. Keep the load close:** Holding a 20 pound object with your hands 20 inches from the body creates more compressive force on your low back than holding it 10 inches away. This is because the muscles in your back have to work harder to counterbalance the weight when it is further from the body. **As the compressive force on your low back increases, so does the risk of muscle strains, ligament sprains and damage to disks in the spine.**
- 2. Avoid lifting from the floor:** Lifting from the floor can greatly increase your risk of injury for two reasons. Firstly, it is difficult to bring objects close to your body when picking them up from the floor, especially large objects where your knees can get in the way. Secondly, your low back must now support the weight of your upper body as you lean forward, in addition to supporting the weight of the item you are lifting. Lifting the same 20 pounds from the floor more than doubles the amount of force on your low back when compared with lifting it from waist height. Even a one pound object lifted from the floor increases your risk of injury if you use a bent over posture.
- 3. Plan ahead:** Decide how you will lift, carry, and place the item before you pick it up. Test the weight of the load by moving or tipping it before you pick it up. Figure out if you can break the load down by placing the contents of a large container into a number of smaller ones before moving them.
- 4. Get help when you need it:** Don't try to lift heavy or awkward loads on your own. Even though the muscles in your upper body may be strong enough to handle the load, the muscles, ligaments and disks in your low back may not be because of the additional forces they have to withstand. Get help from a co-worker, and whenever possible, use a cart, hand truck or other mechanical device to move the load for you.

Organizing your work area

The way you organize your work affects your body's position and the amount of reaching that you have to do. Long reaches to pick up heavy objects or items that you use frequently can contribute to discomfort and injury. This is because reaching puts your body in an awkward position and stretches your muscles beyond their normal limits, making them vulnerable to pulls and strains.

An important concept to think about is how far you can reach without straining your body (**reach zones**). You can determine your **easy reach zone** by moving just your hands and forearms with your elbows at your sides and your shoulders relaxed. For most people, this is an area about 16" to 18" in front of their body. The other zone you need to consider is your **maximum reach zone**, which is how far you can reach just by moving your arm at the shoulder, without leaning forward. For most people this is an area about 26" to 34" in front of their body.



Keep these items in your easy reach zone:

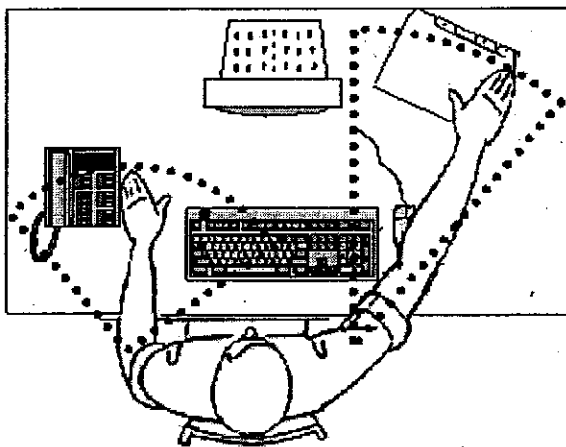
- Frequently used items
- Items that require finger dexterity to use (keyboard, mouse, telephone)
- Items that require hand force to use (stapler, 3-hole punch, staple remover)
- Heavy objects (large binders, manuals, telephone books)

Try to keep items that you use less frequently within your maximum reach zone.

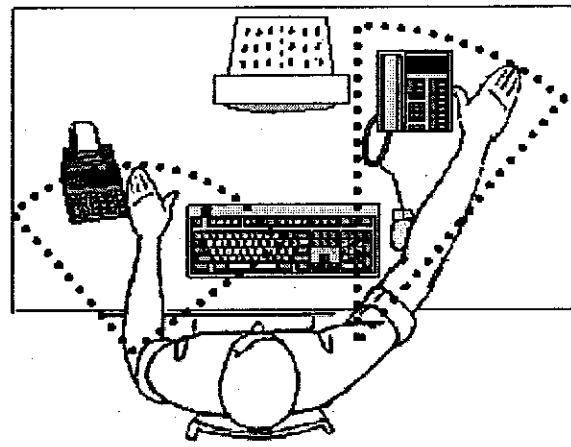
Stand up to reach items that are above your shoulder height or beyond your maximum reach zone.

Customizing your work area

Depending on what your job requires, you might have a different layout than your co-workers. For example, a receptionist might need to have the telephone within easy reach, while an accountant might need to have the calculator closer than the telephone.



Receptionist's Work Area



Accountant's Work Area

You are the best judge of how to arrange your work area, since you know what you use the most often. If you take the time to bring everything into its appropriate reach zone, you'll not only be more comfortable as you work, but also more efficient.

Avoiding eye strain at the computer

If you experience symptoms of visual discomfort, or eye strain, at the computer you are not alone; it's the most common complaint among computer users. The following will help you understand the causes of discomfort and what you can do about it:

Lack of blinking

A common complaint among computer users, especially those who wear contacts, are dry or itchy eyes. This is mainly due to the fact that we tend to blink only one-fifth as much when looking at a computer monitor when compared with reading from paper. Combined with the low humidity levels found in many offices, this results in a drying and irritation of the eyes. If you experience dry eyes, try lowering your monitor so that you are looking slightly down (see the **Monitor height** section below) in order to promote blinking. Make sure that exhaust fans from equipment and from the building's ventilation system aren't blowing directly on you. If dryness and irritation persist, see your eye care specialist.

Close work

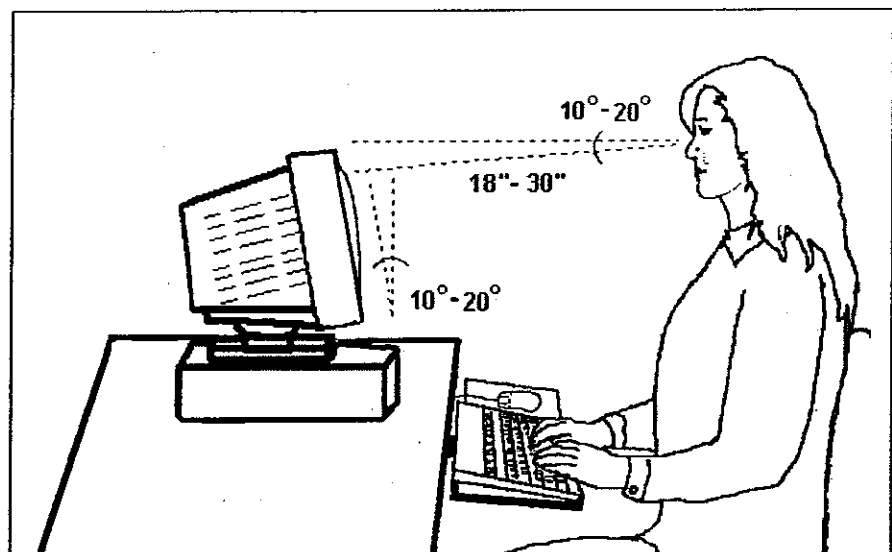
Your eyes are adapted for distance vision; they are most relaxed when you are "staring off into space." However, most of the work that you do in the office, whether it's reading from papers or the computer monitor, is done relatively close to your eyes, and this can cause eye strain. This is because small muscles within your eyes have to work to turn your eyes inward and change the shape of the lenses to focus for near vision. When these muscles fatigue you can experience symptoms of tired, sore eyes the same way that your back muscles will feel tired and sore if you sit for too long in the same position.

Visual angle

When you look down, your eyes have a natural tendency to turn inwards and focus for near vision, since objects that are lower in your field of vision tend to be closer to you. The opposite is true of looking straight ahead or upwards - your eyes tend to turn outwards and focus at a distance, and you will have to work harder to focus on close objects with your head in this position. This is why, when reading from a book or a newspaper, we tend to hold it below eye level. If you read from a monitor or document that is located at eye level or higher, it can contribute to eye strain.

Symptoms of eye strain

- Dry or itchy eyes
- Tired eyes
- Sore eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Headaches



Proper monitor height and distance to prevent eye strain.

Place the monitor at least 18" from your eyes, but close enough so that you can easily read the text without squinting or leaning forward. Adjust the height of the monitor so that the top of the screen is about 10 to 20 degrees below your horizontal line of sight, and tilt it up about 10 to 20 degrees so that the screen remains perpendicular to your gaze. If you wear bifocals, trifocals or progressive lenses you may have to locate the monitor even lower to keep your head level.