

Working from your car

Working from your car is a significant risk factor for musculoskeletal discomfort or pain. This advice sheet provides you with some basic information on how to help minimise this risk.

For further job specific information, and to find out about your own company policy regarding working from your car, we would suggest that you contact your occupational health advisor or health and safety team.

General advice

Working from your car can entail, for example, laptop use, general paperwork, mobile use, and manual handling.



Such tasks, if performed from the car, can involve:

- Static and awkward postures
- Twisting and leaning to one side
- Leaning forward
- Slouching

Ideally we would suggest that you avoid working from your car, and instead find a more suitable place to work, for example, in a café or service station to help achieve a range of good and comfortable postures. If you arrive early for a meeting ask if there is an appropriate place for you to work.

Laptop use

We recognise that an alternative location may not always be practical and therefore provide the following advice if working from your car cannot be avoided.

- If you must use your laptop in the car – move to the passenger seat and place the laptop on your lap. Never sit in the driver's seat while resting the laptop on the passenger seat and vice versa.
- Store your laptop in the boot of your car. This reduces the risk of theft, but also ensures you get out of the car and stretch your legs before using the laptop. Also, it is a safety issue if the laptop is not securely stored in your car and an emergency stop is required.
- Remember to change position frequently and take breaks. Do not work on your laptop for prolonged periods i.e. for more than 10-15 minutes at a time.

Paperwork

If there is no practical alternative and you need to carry out paperwork in the car:

- Try to achieve as good a range of postures as possible, avoiding slouching, leaning forwards and twisting. Also, change position frequently and take breaks.
- Never sit in the driver's seat while resting the paperwork on the passenger seat and vice versa.

Mobile phone

- Never use your mobile phone whilst you are driving.
- If using a hands-free kit ensure that the cradle, microphone and speaker are appropriately positioned to encourage good posture and do not obscure your vision.

Sat Nav

- Never set up or adjust your Sat Nav while you are driving. Find a suitable place to stop and make adjustments to re-calculate your route.
- Position your Sat Nav mount as low as possible and away from your field of vision, minimising the area of your windscreen which is obscured.
- Make sure the Sat Nav is positioned to encourage good posture.

Storage of equipment

- Try to avoid storing equipment (including your laptop) on the front and back seats or in the footwells. Store all equipment in the boot as this will help you to avoid injury when reaching objects.
- Ensure that good and comfortable postures are adopted when manual handling from your car.
- Advice for manual handling from the car can be seen on our advice sheet 'Manual handling from your car'.

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