

July 9, 1987
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INTRODUCED BY: Cynthia Sullivan

PROPOSED NO.: 87-527

MOTION NO. 6911

A MOTION relating to occupational safeguards for King County operators of video display terminals.

WHEREAS, the county council finds that video display terminals have become a common tool in many county workplaces, and

WHEREAS, scientific studies have suggested that health complaints may be attributable to the video display terminal work environment, and

WHEREAS, video display terminal characteristics; the physical layout of the workplace, such as lighting and furniture; and job design all contribute to the development of various job-related stress symptoms or physical discomforts, and

WHEREAS, reduced individual discomfort, disease or vision problems and decreased absenteeism can result from preventive programs and attention to these issues, and

WHEREAS, the county council recognizes the need for a program to assist the county in providing a healthful and safe workplace;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. For the purposes of this motion the following terms are defined as follows:

1. "Terminal" means any type of electronic video screen data presentation machine, commonly known as a video display terminal or cathode-ray tube. Nothing in this section may be construed to apply to television or oscilloscope screens, except to the extent that they are used as terminals for presentation of alphanumeric data.

2. "Terminal operator" means any employee who normally operates a terminal for two or more hours a day.

1 B. The county shall provide for the health and safety of all
2 terminal operators by developing a program to assure suitable
3 workplace conditions and training which must include:

- 4 1. Information about precautions which the employee and
5 the employer can take to minimize hazards;
- 6 2. Training in the proper and safe use of the equipment;
- 7 3. Provision for the vision health and safety of terminal
8 operators, including but not limited to, a comprehensive vision
9 test before starting work on a video display terminal with
10 follow-up testing to identify vision changes and to ensure the
11 use of proper eyeglasses or contact lenses; and
- 12 4. Such other measures as may be recommended.

13 C. The Seattle/King County department of public health shall
14 recommend a program including, as appropriate, the adoption of
15 rules for the use of video display terminals which shall include,
16 but not be limited to, the following elements: video display
17 terminal readability factors, ergonomic qualities, environmental
18 lighting and noise, and job design. The department shall
19 consider the following standards:

20 1. The video display terminal shall have good
21 readability. Factors which affect readability include, but are
22 not limited to: Resolution, appearance of flicker, afterimages
23 or other distractions, choice of character font, size and spacing
24 of dots composing individual characters, size of character
25 matrix, refresh rate, and resistance to environmental glare.
26 Electrostatic and electromagnetic field emissions should be
27 reduced to the extent possible.

28 2. The terminal work station shall be arranged so as to
29 provide the greatest flexibility to the operator. Height of the
30 keyboard and placement of the screen shall accommodate users of
31 different physical dimensions so as to avoid unsuitable work
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1 postures. Sufficient work space should be provided to facilitate
2 the work task.

3 3. Environmental lighting shall be sufficient without
4 impeding the reading of the screen. Glare sources such as
5 unshaded windows or environmental lighting shall be minimized.
6 Adjustable, nonglare task lighting shall be provided as needed.
7 Sources of distracting noise shall be minimized or eliminated.

8 4. The county shall consider the design of jobs so as to
9 avoid monotonous repetitive tasks. To avoid undue stress they
10 shall not impose unreasonable work standards on terminal
11 operators. The department shall consider the adoption rules
12 consistent with the value of frequent, periodic rest breaks for
13 terminal operators engaged in continuous terminal work of more
14 than sixty minutes duration.

15 D. If an operator requests a temporary transfer to
16 nonterminal work and the request is based on a health concern
17 substantiated by a health care provider, the county shall provide
18 such transfer when work is available, without loss of pay,
19 seniority, or any other employment-related benefits.

20 E. The director of the Seattle/King County department of
21 public health shall prepare a report and recommend actions to
22 carry out the purpose of this motion. The report shall be
23 submitted to the council by January 1, 1988. In doing so, the
24 director shall seek the assistance of organizations representing
25 the affected employees, county managers and industry experts. In
26 the interim the director shall request the assistance of the
27 Washington State Department of Labor and Industry to evaluate
28 selected King County video display terminal work stations and use
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1 such analysis for the report and any immediate remedial measures
2 as necessary.

3 PASSED this 20th day of July, 1987

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5 KING COUNTY COUNCIL
6 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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8 Gary Grant
Chair

9 ATTEST:

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11 Janet M. Owens
Clerk of the Council