



Resource Document 19 (2011)

WELFARE OF ANAESTHETISTS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

ERGONOMICS

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Occupational Health and Safety

Anaesthetists have a moral and legal obligation to promote safe practice, and should be leaders in ensuring that policies are followed in the workplace.

Anaesthetists should be aware of the occupational health and safety check lists for any of their workplaces, especially in any new environment. This awareness could include an environmental scan, and a check list of risks. These risks should be reassessed from time to time, including fire safety procedures.

Anaesthetists may be at risk of injuries from moving and positioning patients, moving equipment, and also from poorly arranged work environments.

Any activity that involves lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, pulling, holding, restraining, stretching, bending, sustained and awkward postures, and repetitive movements should be conducted in as safe a way as possible.

Patients could be encouraged to move themselves on and off trolleys and operating tables, if possible. Where this is not possible, "PAT" slides, Slide Sheets, or a "Hovermat" should be used for transferring patients on and off operating tables. The number of transfers of any patient through his or her journey in a hospital should be minimised.

Ways To Help Your Back and Neck

Lifting

Know your own strength - don't lift without thinking
Always lift and carry close to your body.
Bend your knees and make your legs do the work
Don't twist your back, turn with your feet

Sitting

Use an upright (or other suitable) chair with back support.
Get up and stretch every 20-30 minutes.
Place your computer screen at a height at which you do not have to flex or extend your neck, preferably below your horizontal line of vision.
Use appropriate glasses (if necessary) at your computer

Standing

Have your working surface at a comfortable height

Driving

Adjust your seat from time to time, take breaks.
Try a folded towel or other lumbar support in the small of your back.



Activity

20-30 minutes walking, cycling, or swimming 3 times per week.
Gradually increase physical activity.

Relax

Learn how to reduce stress. Use relaxation techniques.

References:

The Back Book. Victorian WorkCover Authority. 1997
www.ergonomicoffice.com.au.

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ACECC is a joint initiative of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists,
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