

## □ CATHODE SCREENS NO MORE DANGEROUS THAN READING, SAY DOCTORS □

**W**orking with a cathode screen for two consecutive hours is no more dangerous to the eyes than reading a book steadily for the same period. The danger arises when a terminal with a cathode screen is used improperly or under poor working conditions. So said doctors Jean-Pierre Lagacé and Claude Léger at the annual symposium of the Quebec Association of Optometrists held in Quebec City.

Of course, there are greater risks for users who are already experiencing eye problems and for those over 40 who are farsighted. Working with a screen will tend to emphasize and even aggravate existing problems among such individuals.

People who are in good physical condition will adapt more easily to the visual task that this constitutes. These cathode screens produce temporary

and reversible visual fatigue in varying degrees among 50 per cent of users.

Among people who are already farsighted, Dr. Lagacé recommends glasses or special lenses when using a cathode-screen terminal. Because this is a specific type of work, a specific "working correction" must be made for farsightedness and used exclusively for work on the terminal, says Dr. Lagacé.

The Quebec Association of Optometrists has a number of other recommendations for users. A comfortable working environment should be created by eliminating all bright lights and noise from the units, and by maintaining a temperature of between 68 and 73 degrees Fahrenheit, and a relative humidity between 50 and 60 per cent.

The association also recommends work schedules that will allow a rest period of between 10 and 15 minutes

for every 60 or 120 minutes of uninterrupted work, depending on the intensity of the job.

When playing video games, the association recommends a 10-minute rest for every half hour of uninterrupted playing, and adherence to the same criteria of visual hygiene as when one watches television, namely having good lighting and maintaining a distance of five times the size of the screen between the viewer and the set.

Of course, there are criteria concerning the unit itself and its arrangement. The best screen colours are green and amber on a black background, while red on black would be disastrous to the eyes, according to Dr. Lagacé.

Finally, Dr. Claude Léger maintains that taking periodic breaks and using drops to keep the eyes from becoming too dry are the most important things to observe □

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## CIRCULAR DOCUMENTS OF INTEREST TO EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

### SMOKING POLICY

Admin. No. 22 — June 1, 1987

On April 22, 1987, the Treasury Board President announced the government's intentions relating to smoking in the workplace.

Employees will be aware of the Department's policy on this important matter which was outlined in Circular Document Admin. No. 24/86 (ABKE), *Smoking in the Workplace*, effective July 1, 1986. Our policy is fully consonant with the declared intentions of the government and was designed

to be an interim measure pending the outcome of discussions at the National Joint Council (NJC). It will, therefore, remain in place until the latter process has been completed. By and large, the policy has worked well but it would be timely to remind employees, especially managers, that they are the only ones who can make it successful.

The Joint Departmental Occupational Safety & Health Committee, composed of both management and staff association representatives, has been monitoring the policy and believes that smoking should be discouraged in

hallways and other open areas where it causes discomfort to non-smokers. The most frequent complaint concerns those employees who use cigars or pipes outside their offices or smoke to such an extent that they cause discomfort to non-smokers nearby. □