

Chair M.O.T - Your guide to inspecting a working chair.

If a chair is provided for a computer user then it will need to meet DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Guidelines.



We recommend that these checks should be carried out at least annually to ensure that the chair is still suitable for the user and in good repair.

The chair should:

- ✓ Incorporate a 5 star base for stability
- ✓ Swivel
- ✓ Have seat height adjustment
- ✓ Offer back height adjustment
- ✓ Have a 'Back Rake' angle movement
- ✓ The back must be able to move independently from the seat pan

Note: 'Managers' style chairs don't usually conform to regulations.

Visual Environment:

- Take a look at the chair - is it in good condition? – are the controls stiff or seized?
- Have a look at the fabric, especially in areas of constant contact such as the seat pan edge.
- Is the chair fit for the environment it is in and the tasks it is used for? Harsh environments may require a vinyl covering, or a CCTV room may require 24/7 components and materials.
- Is the chair fitted with the correct castors for the floor surface, or is it on glides? Draughtsman height stools generally require glide feet for stability reasons. Hard floors require special safety castors.

User Options:

All chairs will have different configurations and different features. Some of the options are listed below:



Arms: There is a vast range of chair arms available and they all aim to do similar jobs. Make sure they are not loose and are securely fastened to the chair. If they are height adjustable make sure the movement is easy and once the desired height is reached that the platform is locked at that position.



Head/ Neck rest: If the chair is provided or fitted with a headrest, make sure it is fastened correctly and if it offers adjustment that it works correctly. Cleanliness can be an issue with head rests so make sure it is visibly clean.



Adjustable lumbar support: Check that the adjustments can be easily made and that the control buttons or levers are in good working order.



Inflatable lumbar support: Inflate the lumbar support and make sure the lumbar pad inflates evenly; listen for escaping air. Then deflate the lumbar support using the release button, make sure the pad goes down evenly.

Seat Slide: This should 'click' into a locked position and should not be free moving.

Physical

Gas lift: Gas pistons will often show signs of wear, these include:

- When sat on the chair it will not maintain its height, and you will sink. This is not always an instant decrease in altitude and it may sink slowly throughout the working day
- When raising the height of the seat, it should be a smooth, fluid movement. A slow, laboured lift could mean the gas lift is wearing
- The gas stem may become fixed, usually at its lowest level.

Unwanted movement: Some chairs have rubber mounts for sideways flexation, but most do not! When sat on the chair with your back pressed into the back rest, rock from side to side. The back should remain in position and not move sideways with you, nor should the seat pan.

Mechanism: Different chairs will have different mechanisms from a standard back rake adjustment to a full knee tilt with independent back and seat adjustments. Sit on the chair and try the levers, are the movements smooth and do they engage easily?

Levers: Make sure the operating levers on the chair move without obstruction and engage the function required. This includes the tension control if fitted; make sure it can be tightened and loosened easily.

Base: The industry standard is a 5 star base. Check to see that it is free from cracks and breaks, and the castors or glides are all received correctly into the moulding.

Castors: These should be dependent on the floor surface. A hard floor surface should have hard floor castors, and a carpeted floor should have... Yes that's right carpet floor castors. Occasionally a chair, and especially draughtsman height chairs may have glide feet for stability reasons. The castors should meet the chair weight specification, and run smoothly without obstruction. Specialist models may have brake loaded castors, or break when unloaded castors fitted. These should be checked on an individual basis.

Back Adjustment: The back height is generally controlled in two ways:

- **Screw tightened:** The screw wheel can be loosened to free the back so it can be set to the desired height and tightened into position. Once tightened the back height should not move. Apply a small amount of pressure to the top of the chair and makes sure the back does not drop in height.
- **Ratchet Back:** The back height can be raised on a ratchet system. Once the back reaches above its highest point it returns to the lowest setting. Occasionally the back will not stay in position. If this happens pull the back to its highest point and try to re-set it onto the ratchet.

Foam Padding: Although the foam in the chair may appear sound, the padding of economy chairs often wear quickly compromising user comfort. Sit on the seat and see if you can feel the plastic or wooden base pan or fitting bolts.



Fit for purpose:

Is the chair suitable for the users build, needs and tasks? All work chairs have a specific maximum weight rating. These should be provided by the supplier or manufacturer and kept on your records for future reference. Basic office chairs tend to grade up to a maximum 19kg, while many quality ergonomic brands support users upto 23kg. Some more specialist seating cater for users up to 30kg or feature lightweight mechanisms for

petite users.

	Your check List	Yes	No	Action?
1.	Does the chair appear to be in good condition?			
2.	Is the chair suitable for its intended use and user? e.g. size, shape, tasks			
3.	Are suitable armrests fitted that don't restrict access to the workstation?			
4.	Does the chair gas height function correctly and safely?			
5.	Does the back rake adjustment move forward and backward easily?			
6.	Does the chair back height adjustment function correctly?			
7.	When sat on the chair is there any unwanted movement or rocking?			
8.	Do the levers move freely without obstruction?			
9.	Do the levers engage the desired function? And lock, if required.			
10.	Is the 5 star base in good condition?			
11.	Is the chair on castors?			
12.	Do they move freely?			
13.	Are they the correct castors for the floor surface?			
14.	Does the foam in the chair offer sufficient comfort?			
15.	When seated can you feel the plastic or wooden seat pan base or fixing screws/bolts?			
16.	Does the chair have additional features?			
17.	If the chair has additional features do they function correctly? Please use the notes section to list the additional features and any points raised.			

Notes: