Ergonomic Lighting Considerations

Contrast
- An aging workforce needs more lighting (contrast), especially task lighting.
- To correct contrast problems: Use ink instead of pencil for hard copy work; use white paper instead of colored; adjust photocopier exposure, monitor brightness and contrast; and decrease reflected glare.
- Data entry speed increases with an increase in illumination and/or contrast.

Contrast is the relationship between the brightness of an object and its background.

Contrast requirements increase exponentially after age 40.

Contrast in text is important too.

Many modern offices are overlit, causing tremendous energy waste, as well as glare and human discomfort.

68% of employees complain about lighting, 79% want to control their light, and 75% say they would be more productive.

People with controllable lighting rated tasks less difficult, felt more comfortable, and experienced a 35% to 42% decrease in energy use.
Dual-lighting components

- Dual-component lighting schemes can positively impact comfort and performance while lowering energy consumption 30 percent to 40 percent.
- Conflict exists between lighting requirements for computer work and paper-based tasks.
- Proper light levels vary significantly with worker age and tasks.
- Cool color temperature lighting for paper-based documents. Warm color temperature for computer work.
- Ideal compromise: warm ambient lighting combined with cool task lighting.
- Position task light opposite the worker’s writing hand.

Correct glare

- Use several low-intensity fixtures vs. one high-intensity.
- Use diffusers.
- Cover bare bulbs with louvers/lens.
- Use adjustable local lighting.
- Reposition light fixtures or work areas.

80% of workers experience glare.

Monitors generate light; paper and surroundings reflect light.

Direct glare: natural light, overhead, and under cabinet lighting
Indirect glare: work surface, monitor, shiny surfaces, paper, and walls

Overhead glare
Direct glare
Screen glare

Common
Blue, cool overhead lighting

Preferred
Yellow, warm overhead lighting

Single component:
- Too much light above eyes
- High energy waste

Dual component:
- Light level determined by user
- 30 percent to 40 percent less energy required

Multiple shadows create vision issues
Single shadow creates visual comfort