

Portable electronic and communication devices include equipment such as iPads, laptop computers, and mobile phones, which can be used in a variety of approved working environments.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide guidance on the safe use of portable electronic and communication devices when carrying out University activities. There are a range of potential hazards to consider and manage including but not limited to:

| <b>HAZARDS</b>   | <b>CONSIDERATIONS / POSSIBLE CONTROLS</b>  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ergonomic hazards                           | Ensure an appropriate set-up and location for use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Minimise frequency and length of use.</li> <li>✓ Take rest breaks (e.g. 5 minutes for every 30 minutes work).</li> <li>✓ Undertake appropriate stretches and exercises e.g. eye exercises.</li> <li>✓ Use aids such as docking stands, external keyboard / monitor / mouse, document holders, etc.</li> <li>✓ Ensure designated carry cases are used when transporting.</li> <li>✓ Avoid awkward postures such as slouching, kneeling or sitting on a floor/bed, lying on back/side, leaning against a wall, resting devices such as a laptop on your knees, or using an iPad horizontally on a desk.</li> </ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical hazards                          | Electrical cords should be regularly inspected for any damage, tested and tagged when required, and used in appropriate locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Avoid water and wet locations.</li> <li>✓ Ensure power outlets are managed appropriately.</li> <li>✓ Turn off devices when not in use.</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                       | Keep sound at low levels to prevent excessive noise exposure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Limit the amount of time you use earbuds, headphones, speakers or earpieces at a high volume when listening to music or other media.</li> <li>✓ Turn the volume down if you can't hear people talking near you.</li> <li>✓ Avoid turning up the volume to block out noise surroundings.</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gravitational hazards (slips, trips, falls) | Portable devices should be used and located to avoid slips / trips. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ensure electrical cords do not cause a trip hazard.</li> <li>✓ It is recommended portable devices are only used when persons are stationary (e.g. not walking, running, driving, etc).</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visibility / Lighting / Glare               | Ensure lighting is appropriate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To improve viewing, enlarge print or adjust brightness/contrast.</li> <li>✓ Position devices to avoid glare / reflections.</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile equipment / Vehicular hazards        | Portable devices are not to be used when driving a University Authorised vehicle, in accordance with State Road Rules. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do not store devices in the area over the air bag, as if activated, an air bag will inflate with great force.</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire / Explosion                            | Turn off portable devices when in potentially explosive atmospheres, such as fuelling and chemical storage areas, below deck on boats, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choking hazards                             | If a portable device contains small parts, keep away from children.  |

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is not exhaustive. For example, high risk areas such as microbiology labs pose specific hazards associated with the use of such devices. Refer to the University *Minimum Standard – Project and Task Risk Management*, for more comprehensive information on hazard identification and risk assessment processes.

For further information and assistance, contact the Human Resources – Work Health and Safety Unit:

Email: [health.safety@utas.edu.au](mailto:health.safety@utas.edu.au)

Phone: 6226 6298