

## Clear Desk Policy

Confidential or sensitive information, whether held electronically or on paper records and other valuable resources should be secured appropriately when staff are absent from their workplace and at the end of each working day.

To facilitate this, the following guiding principles have been produced which cover both non-electronic (e.g. manual/paper files) as well as electronic forms of information.

In addition reference is made to the display of information on the computer / laptop screen as well as to the security of personal property.

- Desks must be cleared at the end of each working day of any confidential or person identifiable information. Files containing confidential information must be locked securely in desks, filing cabinets or designated secure rooms at all times, other than when being used by staff. All efforts must be made to keep this information secure and not readily accessible to non-authorized staff. ☒
- To reduce the risk of a breach of confidentiality and adherence to the Data Protection Act, when disposing of person identifiable information, ensure that it is destroyed securely using approved methods of waste disposal.
- Personal items (i.e. keys, handbags, wallets etc) should be locked away safely in the interests of security. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure all security precautions are taken.
- Health & Safety – desks and other work spaces should be sufficiently tidy at the end of each working day to permit the authority's cleaning staff to perform their duties.

In order to promote a clean desk policy, we recommend you teach the 3 "P"s of office organisation and follow these yourself to set the best example:

**PLAN:** First thing in the morning. Keep just the things you need for your workday on your desk. Start each day with a few minutes of planning so that you can organise the documents you need for immediate work. File all other folders and documents.

**PROTECT:** Information whenever you leave your desk. You obviously have to leave your desk to attend meetings or to take breaks. But whenever you do, make a quick check to see if there is sensitive information on your desk and place it inside a folder or off your desktop. And for additional security, make sure to switch on your computer's password-protected screen saver.

**PICK UP:** At the end of the day. When you leave your desk in the evening, don't leave documents on it. In order to maintain the security of both your client and employee information, it's essential to file your documents or lock them up, if necessary. If you get into the habit of cleaning off your desktop every day before you leave, you'll enjoy the added productivity bene.

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