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Computer Screen Lighting and Glare Issues

Another major issue facing office workers today is computer vision syndrome (CVS), which can cause headaches, eyestrain, neck and back pain, and light sensitivity. According to OSHA, some studies estimate that 90 percent of the seventy million U.S. workers using computers for more than three hours per day experience CVS in some form.

There are several ways to reduce the risks of CVS. The most effective is to reduce or remove screen glare, which primarily affects vision but can also cause awkward postures as people move to avoid the glare. The first line of defense against screen glare is to position monitors away from windows and other light sources. Beyond that, says Dr. Hedge, "Optical glass glare filters on computer monitors can dramatically reduce health and vision problems related to computer glare and help boost productivity in full-time computer users." While there are many screen filters on the market, some low-cost products can actually impair vision, so choosing a quality eye protection filter is critical.

Installing task lighting at each work station is another way to combat CVS. Office lighting is generally not bright enough for most desk work, particularly for the growing population of older office workers who require more light. Task lighting solves the problem by offering a direct source of light where it is needed most on the task at hand. Good task lights provide a wide range of adjustability to avoid glare on the monitor, work surface and documents. The best ones also have an asymmetrical design, which reduces the glare by diffusing the light.