10 TIPS FOR USING A COMPUTER MOUSE

Prepared by Chief Executive Office, Risk Management Branch
Loss Control and Prevention Section
Contact LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov for additional information

The following tips are intended to minimize the risk of mouse-related musculoskeletal injuries.

- *Mouse Grip* – hold the mouse gently to move it over the mouse surface.
- *Mouse from the Elbow* – Make controlled mouse movements using your elbow as the pivot point and keep your wrist straight and neutral.
- *Optimal Mouse Position* – Sit back in your chair, relax your arms, and lift your mouse hand up, pivoting at the elbow until your hand is just above elbow level. Your mouse should be positioned somewhere around this point.
- *Protect Your Wrist* – The wrist is curved away from any contact surface (you can see this by resting your hand/arm on a flat surface – you will see light under the wrist and can probably pass a thin pen under this). The forearm is shaped liked this for the wrist to remain free of surface pressure contact.
- *Avoid Restricting Circulation* – For many people there are blood vessels near the skin at the wrist. Any pressure in this region will disrupt circulation into the hand and will increase the risks of injury.
- *Do Not Use a Wrist Rest* – Research has shown that using a wrist rest while keystroking doubles the pressure inside the carpal tunnel because the floor of the tunnel is a more flexible ligament that transmits external pressure changes directly into the carpal tunnel.
- *Avoid Restricting Arm Movement* – With a softly padded wrist rest or a soft chair armrest, the forearm becomes "locked" into position and encourages people to make mouse movements by flicking the wrist rather than making controlled mouse movements using the elbow as the pivot point.
- *Keep the Mouse Free Moving* – With a keyboard, the best posture is for users to float their hands over the keyboard when typing and then rest them on the palm support during micro-breaks between typing bursts. A mouse is used by moving its location over a surface and resting when mouse movements stop. Anything that impairs free movement of the forearm/hand and mouse will increase injury risks.
- *Mouse Shape* – Choose a mouse design that fits your hand, but is as flat as possible to reduce wrist extension. Use a symmetrically shaped mouse. Also, consider a larger mouse that encourages arm (rather than wrist) movements.
- *Load Sharing* – If you want to share the load between your right and left hands, you will need to choose a mouse platform that can easily be configured to the left and/or right, and a symmetrical shaped mouse that can be used by either hand.
- *Other Input Devices* – If you choose a different mouse design, make sure that you position it comfortably and your wrist is in a neutral position when using the device.