

Ergonomics

Michele Terranova, Ph.D.

In setting up operator workstations, the primary consideration is to optimize the controllers' interaction with each other and their interaction with computers and equipment. There are several ways to ensure this optimization. First know and understand industry standards to determine the best arrangement of screens. These standards will provide general guidelines in optimizing layout, but, each control center is unique with specific work conditions and personnel interactions. For a customized layout, you should solicit controller input and develop a prototype. The prototype can be as simple as a design documented on paper or a more sophisticated three dimensional layout. Ideally, you should develop a prototype for each of your design options. Let controllers know that the finished appearance of each prototype will be very different than what they see in the prototype and that their job is to provide input that will improve on the functionality.

Obtaining feedback from controllers in pairs on each prototype is key to success. Prompt them with scenarios drawn from actual controller experience, ask for comments and feedback on how each of the prototype designs will meet their needs for ease of communication, privacy and silence.

