

DID YOU KNOW?

UK businesses of any size can benefit from reducing their energy consumption—but especially SMEs, which have a potential energy saving opportunity of up to 20 per cent, compared to 8 per cent for large businesses, according to the Carbon Trust.

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How SMEs Can Reduce Energy Consumption and Save Money

Energy costs can be a significant drain on any business, but especially on SMEs, which typically have narrower profit margins than larger businesses.

Yet UK SMEs generally fail to prioritise energy efficiency. According to a Business Energy Index (BEI) survey, only 47 per cent of UK small businesses have methods in place to manage energy efficiency, despite the fact that 87 per cent of businesses reported an increase in energy costs during 2013, according to the Forum for Private Business.

Prioritising energy efficiency also shows a large margin for potential savings—the BEI survey found that 50 per cent of SMEs reported savings of up to 10 per cent directly stemming from implementing energy efficiency measures.

To reduce energy consumption and save your business money, follow these four top tips:

1. Stress to your employees the purpose of energy efficiency.
2. Lock your heating controls at a steady, appropriate setting.
3. Offer energy efficiency competitions to generate interest.
4. Invest in quick, easy ways to cut energy usage that do not require refitting facilities, such as Toilet Hippos that save water.



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Tougher Corporate Manslaughter Fines

The Sentencing Council (SC), the independent, non-departmental public body tasked with developing sentencing guidelines in England and Wales, has proposed cracking down on corporate manslaughter offences by imposing steeper fines in its November 2014 consultation.

In the consultation, which is seeking feedback until 18 February 2015, the SC proposes that large organisations committing corporate manslaughter should face tougher fines of up to £20 million, and that fatal health and safety offences should carry fines of up to £10 million.

Corporate manslaughter is an offence applied to organisations that have caused death through serious management failings. Examples include an employee dying in an on-site explosion resulting from management's insufficient health

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2014 Survey Shows Economic Crime Is on the Rise—Are You Prepared?

The findings of PricewaterhouseCoopers' (PwC) Global Economic Crime Survey 2014 have business owners and high-level employees reassessing their organisations' protections against economic crime. Economic crime such as fraud, IP infringement, corruption, cyber-crime and accounting fraud plagues organisations of all sizes in all industries across the globe.

PwC's survey examines the corrosive effects of economic crime and dispels the myth that its damage is negligible—almost 18 per cent of organisations who suffered fraud in 2014 experienced a financial impact between £600,000 and £63 million, and that is just the immediate damage. As the survey makes clear, damage from economic crime persists well into the future in the form of tarnished reputation, lost revenue, delayed entry to new markets, reduced productivity and battered morale.

Every organisation needs protection from economic crime. In 2014, 37 per cent of organisations reported being hit by economic crime, a sharp increase from the 30 per cent reported in 2009 and the 34 per cent in 2011. Economic crime is on the rise—are you prepared? Assess what your organisation is doing to defend against the five most commonly reported types of economic crime listed below, according to PwC. Each type of crime is listed along with the percentage of organisations who reported that crime in PwC's 2014 survey:

1. **Asset misappropriation** (69 per cent)
2. **Procurement fraud** (29 per cent)
3. **Bribery and corruption** (27 per cent)
4. **Cyber-crime** (24 per cent)
5. **Accounting fraud** (22 per cent)

Comprehensive crime cover, along with implementing some of the following safeguards, can help your organisation guard itself against the rising threat of economic crime:

- Require mandatory holidays for employees handling payments.
- Separate your accounting and operating functions.
- Inspect goods thoroughly every time you receive a new shipment.
- Limit and control your employees' access to storage areas.

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and safety precautions, or a member of the public dying due to a company's substandard health and safety regulations.

The SC report cites the latest HSE figures—in 2013/14, there were 133 cases of fatal injuries at work, while 70 members of the public were fatally injured in work-related accidents—to show that corporate manslaughter is a grave problem. Yet since corporate manslaughter legislation was introduced in England and Wales in 2007, there have been only four convictions.

And, until now, corporate manslaughter fines have been relatively lenient since they have been dependent on a company's financial means, its size and its ability to pay fines. Going forward, the SC hopes to increase fines in order to make a sizeable economic impact on the offending organisation.

The SC's review supports establishing starting points and ranges for fines to ensure proportionate corporate manslaughter sentences. Current guidelines offer no starting points or upper limits, which often results in organisations being under-penalised, according to the SC review.

To voice your opinion on the proposed guidelines, click [here](http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations-current.htm): sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations-current.htm.