

HSE SAFETY CORNERSTONES

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Mental Health Must Be a Priority in 2017

The biennial survey from the Trades Union Congress revealed that 70 per cent of companies have cited stress as the most significant hazard affecting their employees, making it the leading workplace health and safety concern. Stress has most likely earned this distinction because it can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. In fact, two-thirds of employees have experienced symptoms of poor mental health as a result of their workplace environment, according to research published by the charity, Business in the Community (BITC). In addition, HSE research shows that workplace stress is responsible for 37 per cent of all work-related ill health and 45 per cent of all working days are lost due to ill health.

What's more, 94 per cent of business leaders have admitted to being prejudiced against people with mental health issues in their organisations, and 49 per cent of employees have stated that they would not talk to their manager(s) about a mental health issue. For that reason, your organisation should make it a priority to ensure that your employees have strong mental health, as it can help improve overall workplace health and safety.

One way to accomplish this is by having your managers attend a mental health first-aid course. The course is divided into four separate sections and teaches people how to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue. If your organisation is interested in the course, you can find more information by clicking [here](#). Another strategy to help support your employees' mental health is relying on BITC's free Mental Health for Employers Toolkit, which can be found by clicking [here](#).

For more information on how you can support and empower your employees, contact the insurance professionals at **Crendon Insurance Brokers** today.

A Burger King Franchisee Reveals the Impact of Higher Penalties

In February 2016, the new sentencing guidelines for health and safety, corporate manslaughter, and food safety and hygiene offences came into force, which dramatically increased the value of potential fines. These new guidelines apply to any applicable sentence handed down on or after 1st February 2016—regardless of when the offence was committed. The decision was meant to encourage organisations to be more transparent about their practises and to bolster their health and safety programmes.

A recent case involving a Burger King franchisee that was fined £166,600 highlights the substantial impact that the new sentencing guidelines have had on organisations. Due to a legal technicality, the franchisee was fined twice for the same breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA). However, the fine amounts were different because one was filed before 12th March 2015, while the other was filed after (the HSWA specifies different fine amounts for before and after this date). The first breach was for £13,300 and only had a potential maximum fine amount of £20,000. The second breach was for £153,360—even though there was the potential for an unlimited fine amount.

To ensure that your organisation does not receive any similar substantial fines, be sure to undertake a thorough risk management and health and safety review of your premises and policies.

HSE News and Prosecutions

Heinz Beans 'Can Song' Advert Banned Over Injury Fears

The Advertising Standards Authority has banned the Heinz baked beans 'can song' TV advert because it 'encouraged behaviour that prejudiced health and safety' and could result in young viewers injuring themselves on sharp empty tins. In its response, the HSE stated that there is no health and safety legislation that directly applies to the case and hopes that the public realises that there are no regulations preventing children from playing with empty sealed tin cans.

Volvo Sentenced for Worker Fall

The national truck, bus and plant division of Volvo was fined £900,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,820.28, along with a £150 victim surcharge, after a worker fell and suffered severe head injuries. Whilst he was servicing a delivery truck from a step ladder, the worker fell and struck his head. In its investigation, the HSE found that the step ladder was damaged, its anti-slip feet were worn and it had not been inspected.

Man Killed and Another Seriously Injured by Cows

A Bradford on Avon farmer has been given a 12-month prison sentence suspended for two years and was ordered to pay £30,000 after two members of the public were attacked and injured, one fatally, by cows in a field. The two men were walking their dogs along a public footpath that went through a field where cows with calves were grazing. The cows may have viewed the group as a threat and charged them. In its investigation, the HSE found that the farmer had not taken reasonable precautions to protect members of the public walking along the footpaths near his cows.



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