

HSE SAFETY

CORNERSTONES

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IN THIS ISSUE

Flexible Working: Good for Euro 2016 and for Business

To better accommodate your employees' passion for the Euro 2016 matches, consider implementing flexible working hours and maybe even continuing the practice outside of the tournament's dates.

Hay Fever Causes 29 Million Days of Lost Productivity Every Year

Nearly half of all Britons suffer from hay fever, and even those with mild reactions experience a reduction in productivity.

Recent HSE News and Prosecutions

Read about the HSE issuing a warning to HGV drivers, a Scottish energy firm that ignored safety precautions which cost it nearly £2 million, a tyre company's negligence that cost an employee his life, and a coach company that refused to comply with basic safety practices.

Flexible Working: Good for Euro 2016 and for Business

High-profile sporting tournaments like Euro 2016 generally usher in huge spikes of workplace absences and low productivity. That is why the Trades Union Congress is urging employers to allow their staff to watch Euro 2016 matches at work or at home, and then make up the time later. Organising match-viewing parties at work or allowing employees to work flexibly during matches can help engender a sense of camaraderie, improve happiness among staff and actually raising productivity.

However, choosing to ignore the matches could actually damage your organisation's productivity. Almost three-quarters of UK HR directors believe that employees are likely to call in sick or make excuses for skipping work the day after a major sporting event, according to a June survey from international recruitment broker, Robert Half. These 'sporting sickies' can result in lost productivity on the day of the match as well as the following day when people call in sick after over-indulging. Neglecting to institute a flexible working policy or to organise staff viewing parties can leave employees feeling like the only way they can cheer on their teams is by calling in sick.

Whether they have the option to or not, employees will watch Euro 2016 during working hours. During Euro 2012, an average of 13 million UK viewers watched every game in the tournament, which is about 20 per cent of the entire UK population.

However, your organisation does not have to send employees home to enjoy an exciting match—you can have a screening at the office, too. According to research by the Institute of Leadership and Management, 77 per cent of employees think that screening the Euro matches in the office would boost morale, while 30 per cent said it would help improve productivity. Here are five other tips for incorporating Euro 2016 and other sporting tournaments into your workplace:

1. Talk to employees about potential arrangements for upcoming key matches.
2. Offer employees the option to work from home, or allow them to start late or work flexible hours so that they are able to finish their shifts.
3. Implement an incentive scheme to encourage your employees to complete their work on time, so that they may enjoy a sporting tournament.
4. Inform HR that they should be as flexible as possible with annual leave requests.
5. Organise a sweepstakes for tickets to a local match.

While it makes sense to offer flexible work hours during Euro 2016, your company may also want to offer flexible working arrangements throughout the year. In fact, 95 per cent of employers say that flexible working strategies have a high impact on employee retention and nearly 60 per cent of employers identify cost savings as a significant benefit to flexible working, according to research from Global Workplace Analytics.

For more information on flexible working programmes and other strategies to keep your employees safe, productive and happy, contact **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.



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Hay Fever Causes 29 Million Days of Lost Productivity Every Year

According to a recent survey conducted by the Met Office, 41 per cent of Britons suffer to some extent from hay fever, a seasonal allergy that causes symptoms such as a runny nose, sneezing and watery eyes. While the reaction to allergens can range from mild to more serious, 11 per cent of Britons experience symptoms severe enough to cause them to miss an average of 8.4 working days each per year—which amounts to about 29 million days in lost productivity every year. Even Britons who experience mild reactions see a negative impact, as they estimate that their productivity drops by an average of 26 per cent when coping with hay fever.

Even though your organisation cannot control the onset of hay fever, you can take proactive, precautionary measures to limit its impact on your organisation. Follow these tips to mitigate the effects of hay fever and other seasonal allergies:

- Direct your employees toward the Met Office [forecast app](#), which provides users with an up-to-date forecast on pollen.
- Offer the option to work from home for the employees that are most affected by hay fever and other seasonal allergies.
- Keep all windows in the office closed.
- Increase the frequency of dusting and vacuuming.
- Provide your employees with the option to get tested for allergies.

For more guidance on how your organisation can provide a safe working environment for your employees, contact Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd today.



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NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

Death of road worker prompts HSE warning to HGV drivers

In January 2015, a 20-year-old road worker died when an HGV tractor unit unexpectedly rolled backwards and crushed the man against another vehicle. As a result, the HSE has emphasised the importance of following basic safety procedures when coupling and uncoupling vehicles. These practices require that all HGV drivers apply parking brakes and use warning alarms. If HGV drivers fail to follow those practices, they can expect to receive fines and even prison time.

Scottish energy firm fined nearly £2 million for safety failings

ScottishPower Generation Limited, an energy company, was fined £1.75 million after a worker was badly scalded. A plant controller received the serious injuries when he opened a faulty valve, which caused highly pressurised steam to escape. In its investigation, the HSE found that while the company was aware of the defective valve, it did not take the appropriate steps to either repair or remove it from use.

Tyre company's negligence costs an employee his life

Watling Tyre Service Limited, a Kent tyre company, was fined £1 million and ordered to pay costs of £99,485 after safety failings caused a tyre to explode, killing an employee. The 21-year-old employee was repairing a puncture to the tyre when it ruptured. In its investigation, the HSE found that the employee was using inadequate work equipment which was not properly maintained and had not received the proper training to safely and successfully complete the task.

Coach company repeatedly failed to comply with safety regulations

GHA Coaches Limited was fined £250,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,068 after it repeatedly failed to comply with legal notices to get its lifting equipment examined. A 2015 inspection revealed that the company had at least 14 pieces of equipment that were overdue for a Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) examination. As a result, an improvement notice was served and extended twice, and the company still failed to comply. In its investigation, the HSE found that a previous improvement notice was served in 2011.