

HSE SAFETY

CORNERSTONES

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Honour your employees by implementing beneficial workplace policies that also provide you with serious financial returns.

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Drink and drugs annually cost the UK economy millions in lost productivity. Find out how to shield your organisation from the ill effects of workplace drink and drugs.

Recent HSE News and Prosecutions

Read about how a mound of soya meal killed a lorry driver, how a safety oversight led to a factory worker becoming trapped in an autoclave, how negligence caused a farm accident and why a wine bar refused to serve a vicar.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work

To better address workplace health and safety risks and to encourage more beneficial policies, the International Labour Organisation created the World Day for Safety and Health at Work. The international day of safety awareness occurs annually on 28th April and highlights how investing in health and safety provides financial returns for businesses. The campaign encourages businesses to invest in sustainable, long-lasting health and safety practices that improve working conditions.

Health and safety is good for business—organisations that wish to stay competitive and ensure their employees maintain a high level of well-being and satisfaction should regularly review their wellness programmes, since such programmes help deter illness and injury. In 2013-2014, the most recent collected data from the HSE, 28.2 million working days were lost in the United Kingdom due to workplace illness, amounting to roughly £14 billion lost annually. To ensure that your business is able to protect its investments, incorporate these five health and safety programmes into your scheme:

1. Require organisation-wide education and training to minimise the risk of injury.
2. Reorganise working environments to promote safety and productivity.
3. Provide regular health assessments to identify which employees may be at risk.
4. Offer mental health services for employees.
5. Produce employee-specific advice and education on health, wellness and safety procedures on a quarterly basis. These sessions could occur more frequently, but not less.

Small tweaks to an organisation's health and safety programmes can cause small initial changes—such as a small decrease in workplace accidents—but provide huge, long-term dividends. For example, a European car manufacturer was able to save about £11 million over the course of three years by reducing its employee absenteeism by just 1 per cent. Taking a proactive approach to employee well-being by evaluating and refining existing health and safety programmes can help organisations realise some of the following benefits:

- Increased staff productivity and reduced costs, such as for energy or materials
- Improved quality of products and services
- Rise in employee well-being, increased job satisfaction and overall positive work climate
- Compensations and subsidies from insurance or government schemes
- A revamped, positive public image due to your dedication to employee safety and well-being

Strong, enduring health and safety programmes are vital to your employees' well-being as well as your business' financial investments. If you are interested in learning more about how health and safety programmes are able to save your organisation money, visit www.britsafe.org/news/save-lives-save-money-business-benefits-health-and-safety or, if you are interested in learning more about World Day for Safety and Health at Work, visit www.ilo.org/safework/events/safeday/lang--en/index.htm.



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Drink & Drugs a Major Workplace Menace

Roughly one-third of workers admitted to using drugs while at work and nearly every worker admitted to having been drunk or hung-over at work in a recent survey conducted by Protecting.co.uk, a national health and safety consultancy. This negligence and lack of pride in one's work annually costs the UK economy millions of pounds in lost productivity. However, beyond lost revenue, this behaviour additionally increases health and safety risks.

Despite more than 50 per cent of workers admitting that they believed their bosses and colleagues were able to recognise a change in their performance due to alcohol, they still chose to imbibe. The two most common reasons for workers choosing to work while impaired were that it (drink and drugs) helped relieve the boredom of the day and it helped ease workplace tension. Yet these reasons do not excuse the repercussions, which include frequent tardiness and absenteeism, reduced concentration and focus, increased mistakes and clerical errors, and impaired judgement and abilities. Depending on the industry, these repercussions can lead to lost or misplaced revenue, injuries, accidents or even death.

If you believe or suspect that your workers—and thus your business—have alcohol or drug problems, follow these four steps to deal with the issue:

Step 1: Find out if there is a problem – Discuss with your workers the effects of alcohol consumption, any existing work-related stressors and any issues with productivity or accidents that you believe involved alcohol.

Step 2: Decide what to do – Review your business' current alcohol policy and decide if it requires editing. Before any final decisions are made, consult with your workers and upper management to discuss their perspectives.

Step 3: Take action – With the support of upper management, organise a training session to explain any amendments to the policy, including alcohol screenings.

Step 4: Review what you have done – Regularly review your workers' performance and absences to verify if the amended policy has been successful.



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NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

Lorry driver killed by mound of soya meal

A Cobham animal feed company was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £20,095.10 after a lorry driver was buried alive under a mound of soya meal. The 64-year-old driver was working on the terminal dock when the stockpiled meal collapsed onto him and killed him. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company had failed to assess the risks present to nonemployees such as hired lorry drivers.

A tyre factory oversight leads to worker's death

A tyre manufacturer was fined £150,000 and ordered to pay £46,706 in prosecution costs after an employee was trapped in an industrial autoclave for more than two hours and died. The 48-year-old employee had entered the autoclave, which heats rubber tyre beads to 145 degrees Celsius, to collect fallen beads. However, the employee became trapped after the door sealed shut with no way to escape. The HSE found that the manufacturer failed to identify the autoclave as an enclosed space and provide methods of escape for individuals who may be trapped inside. A confined works permit could possibly have saved the employee's life.

Farming family's negligence causes toddler mauling

A Derbyshire farming family was fined a combined amount of £9,000 and ordered to pay a combined total of £2,000 in costs after a three-year-old's foot was pulled into a grain auger. The unidentified child was walking around the barn floor where grain was being moved into an auger when his foot became caught in the auger—causing deep lacerations that required surgery and several days in hospital to recuperate. The HSE found that the family had not installed the proper safety precautions—restricted access, safety guards and rails—to prevent child injuries.

Vicar refused service at bar for wearing sandals

An Ipswich vicar was denied entry into a local wine bar due to his footwear—sandals. The 58-year-old vicar was told that his choice of footwear unnecessarily exposed him to the risk of a dropped glass or bottle injuring his foot. Despite citing health and safety concerns, the wine bar should not refuse potential patrons based upon their choice of footwear, according to the HSE.