

HSE SAFETY

CORNERSTONES

MARCH 2018

Britain in Throes of Stress Epidemic

Unfortunately, stress has become a common state of being in the United Kingdom, as 82 per cent of people experience it at least once throughout an average week, according to the marketing research company, OnePoll. One cause for this new 'norm' can be attributed in part to the sense of obligation to always be available for work-related matters—even after hours. In fact, 59 per cent of employees admitted to taking calls outside work and 55 per cent admitted to checking their email after hours. While employers may find this devotion heartening, it can be dangerous, as this type of workplace culture can cause serious employee burnout.

Left unaddressed, this type of workplace culture can cause employees to experience detrimental physical and mental health effects, including the following:

- Insomnia, anxiety or depression
- Low morale, short temper and headaches
- Stomach or back problems

To ensure that your organisation is able to provide a workplace culture that emphasises low stress and supports mental health, consider doing the following:

- Review employee expectations to ensure they are reasonable. Rely on free [stress at work guidance](#) from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.
- Complete the HSE's [stress risk assessment](#) at least every other quarter to promptly address any potential stressors early on before they become worse.
- Consider purchasing the [HSE's stress indicator tool](#), which measures the attitudes and perceptions of your employees towards work-related stress.

Health and Safety Fines Keep Rising

2 February was the second anniversary of the Sentencing Council's new, stricter sentencing guidelines for corporate manslaughter, food safety and hygiene offences, and health and safety offences. During that time, the courts have not been shy about imposing new guidelines, as the value of all HSE fines in 2016-17 totalled £69.9 million, an 80 per cent increase over the previous year. What's more, the average fine amount increased to £126,000, more than double the average amount in 2015-16 (£58,000).

To ensure that your organisation prioritises health and safety and avoids the serious repercussions from these new fines, the simplest solution is to be HSE compliant. It is also the cheapest solution, as the average cost of compliance is 65 per cent cheaper than the average HSE fine, according to health and safety consultants, Arinite. In addition to remaining compliant, consider the following:

- Conduct a thorough risk management and health and safety review of your premises and policies.
- Provide annual comprehensive safe work practices training for all your employees.
- Schedule an annual inspection from a health and safety consultant.

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HSE News and Prosecutions

Birmingham Contractor Fined £500,000 After Worker Struck by Tipper Truck

MV Kelly Ltd was fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £30,000 with a victim surcharge of £120 after a worker was struck by a tipper truck. The worker was trying to get the attention of a vehicle in an adjacent worksite when he was struck and run over by a truck. While the accident did not kill him, the worker suffered serious injuries. In its investigation, the HSE found that the walkways connecting the adjacent worksites were insufficiently protected and the traffic management plan was not up to date.

Tata Steel Fined £1.4m After Health and Safety Failings Lead to Death

Tata Steel UK Limited was fined £1.4 million and ordered to pay costs of £140,000 after a maintenance electrician was crushed by an overhead crane. The electrician was in a cage examining a piece of heavy equipment when an overhead crane travelled over him, trapping him and then crushing him. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company had failed to enforce essential control measures that would have prevented the incident.

Manufacturing Company and Contractor Fined After Failing to Prevent Exposure to Asbestos

Cater Brothers (Rochdale) Ltd was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,913.94 after it failed to prevent exposure of workers and others to asbestos. The company had hired a T/A Jet Blast and Maintenance contractor to clean an asbestos cement roof. However, the contractor failed to identify the risks involved with the project and, as a result, caused asbestos debris to scatter throughout the premises. For his part, the contractor was fined £330 and ordered to pay costs of £3,910.94.

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