

HSE SAFETY

CORNERSTONES

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Follow these five tips to stop workplace violence before it erodes morale and productivity.

HSE Increases Cost Recovery Rates

With the new regulations that came into force in early April, noncompliant organisations can expect higher fees.

Recent HSE News and Prosecutions

Read about the owners of Alton Towers pleading guilty to health and safety failings, an Accrington landlord that repeatedly failed to have the properties' petrol appliances inspected, and three companies that failed to implement safe working practices.

How to Stop Workplace Violence

One in 8 employees have experienced workplace violence, according to a recent survey conducted by the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The HSE defines workplace violence as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'. This could include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks. Of the nearly 600,000 incidents that were reported in 2014-2015, more than half were instigated by individuals from outside the organisation. In addition, more than 40 per cent of employees who have been victims of workplace violence have gone on to report multiple incidents.

Left unchecked, workplace violence, or the probability that an employee may be the target of violence, can quickly erode employee productivity and morale. This potentially hazardous work environment could destroy your organisation's overall well-being as it would make it more difficult to retain existing employees as well as recruit new ones. And, by not finding ways to prevent incidents, your organisation could experience increased costs as a result of having to pay health and safety fines, hire temporary workers to fill in for injured employees and repair your tarnished public reputation.

To ensure that your organisation is able to combat workplace violence, follow these five tips:

1. Provide training for all employees on what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how to properly report violent incidents.
2. Develop a comprehensive scheme to prevent workplace violence. This could include providing employees with conflict resolution training and establishing a system for reporting stressors or conflicts. Regardless of whatever your scheme entails, remember to review it at least annually.
3. Treat verbal abuse and threatening language as workplace violence, as it may develop into a physical incident.
4. Develop an incident form. This document should include information such as the time and location of the incident, a description and/or name of the assailant, and an outline of any injuries suffered. (Note: All forms and documents related to workplace violence should be available in multiple languages for employees whose first language is not English.)
5. Provide employees who report an incident of violence with the timeline on the actions that will be taken, and reassure them that they will be protected. In addition, you may want to provide employees with information on available services outside of your organisation to help them cope with and process the incident.

While your organisation can never truly prevent all incidents of workplace violence, you can implement beneficial procedures and practices to minimise its potential detrimental effects. For additional guidance on how to provide your employees with a safe working environment, contact **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.



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HSE Increases Cost Recovery Rates

On 6th April, the Health and Safety and Nuclear (Fees) Regulations 2016 came into force, increasing all of the fees charged by the HSE and other licensing authorities (such as the police, fire and rescue services and local authorities) by 4 per cent. For example, the new regulations increased the hourly rate for the HSE's Fee for Intervention (FFI) cost recovery scheme from £124 to £129.

The HSE increased its cost recovery rates after experiencing a deficit in its main cost recovery regimes for the last two years. Whilst the HSE's appropriate level of regulatory activity has been relatively stable during that period, costs for specialist staff has increased significantly. Rising staff costs, coupled with inflationary pressures for 2016-2017 and increased employer national insurance costs, made the previous fees impractical.

To help minimise any extra costs your business may have to pay under the new regulations, ensure that your organisation remains compliant by following these two pieces of guidance:

1. Conduct an annual risk assessment for each task and piece of equipment—no matter how innocuous—and develop processes to address any potential risks.
2. Develop a forum—either online or in-person—for your employees to discuss potential health and safety hazards that they regularly encounter.

However, what may be the most beneficial strategy is to contact the experts at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** and discuss what your organisation can do to ensure that you remain compliant.



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NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

Alton Towers' Owners Plead Guilty to Safety Failings

On 22nd April, Merlin Attractions Operations Ltd, the firm that owns the theme park, Alton Towers, pled guilty to safety failings that caused four people to sustain serious injuries. This admission marks the first time that a major UK theme park has admitted to a criminal breach of health and safety laws. The firm is expected to be served a substantial fine, which could potentially reach as high as seven figures, when the firm appears at Stafford crown court on 20th May.

Accrington Landlord in Court for Gas Safety Failing

An Accrington landlord was fined £20,000 toward HSE costs and sentenced to six months imprisonment after he ignored repeated warnings to arrange an annual gas safety check at a house in town. At least once per year, landlords are legally required to have gas appliances inspected by a Gas Safe registered engineer. However, the landlord failed to do this for nearly two years and this caused gas appliances at several of his properties to be considered 'at risk' or 'immediately dangerous'. In its investigation, the HSE found that the landlord wilfully ignored the safety of his tenants for monetary personal gain.

Explosion at Vehicle Seat Manufacturer Injures Worker

Sears Manufacturing Company (Europe) Limited, of Rasseu Industrial Estate, was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £12,010 in costs after a worker was injured by an explosion. A release agent that was used to prevent dispensed foam from sticking to seat moulds ignited, which caused a worker to suffer burns to his head and hands. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company failed to implement suitable control measures to ensure that an incident like this would not occur.

3 Companies Fined for Safety Violations

Worksafe Training & Consultancy Ltd, Jan Cavelle Furniture Company Ltd, and Leading Health & Safety Consultants Ltd were fined a collective amount of £45,500 and ordered to pay £31,500 in costs after two incidents occurred at the Haverhill site of Jan Cavelle Furniture Company. In its investigation, the HSE found that both incidents occurred due to the adoption of unsafe work practices, which was the result of inadequate training, supervision and risk assessments. Had the potential risks been properly assessed, appropriate safe work practices could have been developed and adopted that would have protected workers from potential hazards.