

# HSE SAFETY

# CORNERSTONES

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## What Health and Safety Champions Can Teach You

Enacting proper health and safety should not be a burden upon an organisation—rather, it should help enable its success. Since it was introduced in 1974, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act has reduced the number of fatal workplace injuries by more than 80 per cent—with only 142 recorded workplace fatalities between 2014 and 2015. The success of the Act is grounded in the enforcement of general duties and regulations meant to keep employees safe. Yet, despite the Act's importance in promoting workplace safety, it can sometimes be difficult to know how to effectively integrate health and safety into day-to-day practice.

However, there are a number of organisations that have been successful in developing beneficial strategies to adequately protect their employees. Read about two such organisations below and learn from what made their health and safety schemes successful:

1. **The London 2012 Olympic Park:** The project began in 2007 with the goal of transforming 2.5 square kilometres of London's East Side into a well-organised centre for tens of thousands of athletes and spectators who would be attending the 2012 Olympics. It took nearly five years and over 40,000 workers, but the project was completed ahead of schedule, on budget and without a single work-related death. The project's success can be attributed in large part to a pair of key features:
  - An on-site, fully operational health service, Park Health, was developed solely to meet the day-to-day and long-term health needs of the entire staff.
  - The health and safety scheme was developed, in part, with input from industry experts, contractors, regulators, and health and safety experts in order to create a comprehensive scheme.
2. **Diageo's Leven Packaging Plant:** The whiskey bottling plant employs 1,000 workers and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In 2015, the plant was crowned the winner of the health and safety category at the Best Factory Awards. The plant was given the award for a 26 per cent year-on-year reduction in total accidents, with just one lost-time accident in the past year. Two factors made the plant uniquely successful:
  - Each employee was required to sign a safety pact agreement which lists five or six commitments to personally achieve greater safety on the site.
  - A programme was developed specifically to focus on musculoskeletal injuries—such as fractures, dislocations, sprains or strains—that can occur while completing any task at the plant.

In addition to the strategies gleaned from these two organisations, follow these four universal health and safety strategies:

1. Develop and regularly review the currently active health and safety policies.
2. Properly assess the risks posed by each required or potential task.
3. Consult your employees about any activity, task, equipment or workplace culture that could significantly affect their health and safety.
4. Regularly consult with a licensed safety professional on which health and safety procedures need to be enforced.

The effectiveness and comprehensiveness of an organisation's health and safety programme is directly tied to its success through the well-being of its employees. Therefore, regularly review, update and adapt your organisation's health and safety programme to meet the ever-changing needs of your employees.

# Deregulation Act's Impact on Health & Safety

On 1st October, the Deregulation Act 2015 (the Act) came into force. The Act aims to reduce the legislative and regulatory burdens that affect businesses, organisations and individuals. Amongst the revisions made to existing legislation were two drastic amendments to the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. These reforms pertain to self-employed individuals and turban-wearing Sikhs.

The Act exempts individuals from general health and safety duties if they are self-employed and their work activities pose no potential risk of harm to others. However, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 would still apply if you meet either of these two qualifications:

1. If the equipment, materials or substances that you use create an excessive amount of noise, are able to burn or scald an individual, produce dust, pose a trip hazard, or can cause an injury of any kind to anyone who enters your work area.
2. If you work in one of these industries:
  - Construction
  - Agriculture
  - Railways
  - Gas or asbestos
  - Genetically modified organisms

For example, if you were a hairdresser, the Act would apply to you only if you simply washed and cut hair. But, if you used bleaching agents or similar chemicals, then you would still have to follow general health and safety guidelines.

Additionally, the Act exempts turban-wearing Sikhs from wearing head protection in the workplace. However, they will still be required to wear all other personal protective equipment (PPE).

For more information on how the Act effects individuals who are self-employed visit, [www.hse.gov.uk/self-employed/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/self-employed/index.htm)



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## NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

### Hydraulic company sentenced after employee loses sight

Lodematic Components Ltd, a hydraulic cylinder manufacturer, was fined £35,000 and ordered to pay £7,835.52 in prosecution costs after an employee was struck in the head with a pressurised hose. The worker was conducting a test on a hydraulic cylinder when a connector failed, causing the hose to strike him in the face. The blow broke his jaw and blinded him in his right eye. In its investigation, the HSE found that the test zone was not safeguarded and the equipment was not properly maintained. Had the company assessed the potential risks and the condition of its equipment, the incident could have been avoided.

### Restaurant owner fined over employer liability insurance

Hasret Sasmez, owner of a Starburger in Woolwich, was fined £1,500 and ordered to pay £1,779 in costs after failing to provide employers' liability compulsory insurance (ELCI). At the hearing, the HSE emphasised that every employer is legally obligated to provide ELCI, lest they want to be pursued by the HSE.

### HR Manager for an office-based company refused to buy weights for a gym

An HR manager has refused to purchase weights for the office gym, citing health and safety concerns as the cause for the decision. The HSE Myth Busters Panel concluded that there is no health and safety at work legislation that would bar the purchase and dissuade the use of the equipment. However, the company may have alternate reasons for not purchasing the equipment and, in that case, should be honest with its employees about what it can and cannot provide as well as its reasoning.

### Global firms sentenced after worker killed

Siemens Wind Power A/S and Fluor Ltd were fined £650,000 and ordered to pay £376,403 in costs after a wind turbine blade crushed one worker and injured another. A team of engineers were loading components for an offshore wind turbine onto a barge when a piece fell onto the deck—killing one engineer and severely injuring another. In its investigation, the HSE found that both firms had failed to institute thorough management systems, which allowed for the lax inspections that led to the accident. Had either firm instituted a safety procedure to ensure that equipment was properly secured, this accident would not have happened.