

HSE SAFETY CORNERSTONES

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Mental Health Conditions Are on the Rise

Mental health conditions—which include depression, anxiety and stress—have become far too common in the workplace, as 1 in 6 people experience a mental health problem in any given week, according to the NHS. In fact, 55 per cent of organisations reported that in 2017 the number of employees with mental health conditions increased, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. This is a jump from 41 per cent in 2016. Left unaddressed, mental health problems can reduce productivity and profitability—costing your organisation an average of £1,035 for each employee according to the Centre for Mental Health.

Fortunately, there are several simple strategies to help your employees effectively manage their mental health.

- Offer employees flexible work hours.
- Provide easy access to employee assistance programmes.
- Include mental health provisions in your policies and procedures.
- Involve employees in the decision-making process about well-being initiatives.

For more information about what your company can do to promote positive mental health, contact Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd today.

If Your Health and Safety Policy is Out of Date, it Could Cost You £126,000

In 2016-17, the HSE had a 93 per cent conviction rate, with the average penalty costing organisations £126,000. Now, take a minute to review your health and safety policies—are they sufficient enough to avoid such a staggering fine? If you're unable to arrive at a satisfactory answer, you may need to review your policies. Even though such a task may seem too large and intimidating to properly address, it can be made more manageable with the following strategies:

- **Assess your risks.** Undertake a formal risk assessment of your organisation at least once per year. These assessments should examine tasks, equipment, methods and work environments to identify potential risks. Be sure to keep a written copy if you have at least five employees.
- **Discuss health and safety issues with your employees.** Meet with your employees to discuss what risks they regularly encounter.
- **Consult health and safety specialists.** For certain situations or equipment, your organisation should contact a certified specialist to conduct an inspection. Ideally, these inspections should be conducted at least annually.
- **Review and revise your inspection programme.** Your organisation's risk management and inspection programmes should be reviewed annually, or after any health and safety incidents have occurred.

HSE News and Prosecutions

Construction Firm Fined Over Safety and Welfare Failings

Toft Construction Ltd was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,176.90 after failing to safeguard its workers and the public. The firm had been hired to refurbish a domestic property, which required deep excavation in the front garden. In its investigation, the HSE found that the firm had failed to implement safety barriers between the public and the hole. What's more, the firm did not provide a toilet or washing facilities for its workers.

Cornwall-based Tree Surgeon Sentenced After Tree Felling Incident

A tree surgeon employed by Truro Tree Services was fined £615 and ordered to pay costs of £1,000 after a tree that he was working on fell into a public area and hit a parked car. The tree surgeon initially followed the correct procedure to fell the tree, but when it did not work, he decided to use his work truck. The more aggressive method worked, but it caused the tree to fall in an unintended direction into a public area and damage a car. In its investigation, the HSE found that the tree surgeon was not sufficiently trained or qualified to handle the job.

£40K Fine After Two Employees Injured in Fire at Adhesive Manufacturer

Itac Ltd, an adhesive manufacturer, was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,309.74 after two employees were injured in a major fire. Prior to the fire, the HSE had given the manufacturer an enforcement notice to address the problematic way that it stored flammable liquids. In its investigation, the HSE found that the manufacturer allowed an untrained employee to address the issue and his attempt led to the fire.

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