

# HSE SAFETY

# CORNERSTONES

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## Workplace Stress Top Health and Safety Concern

The biennial survey from the Trades Union Congress revealed that 70 per cent of companies have cited stress as the most significant hazard affecting their employees, making it the leading workplace health and safety concern. Stress has most likely earned this distinction because it can exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. In fact, two-thirds of employees have experienced symptoms of poor mental health as a result of their workplace environment, according to research published by the charity Business in the Community (BITC). What's more, HSE research shows us that workplace stress is responsible for 35 per cent of all work-related ill health and 43 per cent of all working days lost due to ill health.

One possible explanation for why stress has become so pervasive and costly to workplaces is that 63 per cent of managers feel pressured to place the interests of their organisation ahead of their team's well-being, according to BITC. Other common workplace factors that contribute to stress include heavy workloads, long working hours and poor work-life balance.

Left unaddressed, these unfavourable workplace conditions could cause almost one-third of employees to seriously consider leaving their current positions within the next 12 months, according to industry research. Also, this unhealthy environment may cause employees to experience detrimental physical and mental health effects, including the following:

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

What's more, a staggering 62 per cent of employees believe that their employers look down on them for being stressed, according to a study from employment website CV-Library. This perception could then further exacerbate the harmful effects of stress.

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

1. Review employee expectations to determine whether or not they are reasonable, and, if they are not reasonable, adjust them.
2. Meet with your employees to discuss what their regular, day-to-day stressors are and develop potential solutions based on their feedback.
3. Tackle workplace stress using the HSE's Management Standards for work-related stress, found here: [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards).
4. Rely on BITC's free Mental Health for Employers toolkit to help support employee mental health and well-being, found here: <http://wellbeing.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/mental-health-employers>.
5. Direct your employees to the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](http://www.bacp.co.uk), which offers information on counselling and therapy and a free 'Find a Therapist' service.

For more information on how you can support and empower your employees, contact the experts at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd** today.



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# 1 out of 2 Companies Have Never Had a Health and Safety Inspection

Regular health and safety inspections are recommended for any company, regardless of industry. Yet, 46 per cent of all companies have never had a health and safety inspection, and only 24 per cent have had an inspection within the past 12 months, according to a recent survey published by the Trades Union Congress.

This pervasive inattention to health and safety may have been a contributing factor in the 611,000 work-related injuries and 500,000 new work-related illnesses that occurred in 2014/15, according to the HSE. The responsibility for ensuring the safety of your employees rests—first and foremost—with your company. For that reason, your company should consider implementing the following HSE-recommended best practices:

- 1. Plan an inspection programme:** Your company should appoint at least one health and safety inspector to conduct inspections, ideally once per quarter. These inspections should examine tools, tasks, equipment, methods and work environments to identify potential risks.
- 2. Discuss health and safety issues with staff:** Your health and safety inspectors should meet with your staff to discuss what risks they regularly encounter.
- 3. Consult health and safety specialists:** For certain situations or equipment, your company should contact a certified specialist to conduct the inspection. Ideally, these inspections should also be conducted quarterly.
- 4. Review and revise inspection programme:** Your company's inspection programme should be reviewed annually, or after any health and safety incidents have occurred.

To help your health and safety inspector, the HSE has an [inspection form](#) and a [report form](#), in case any risks are found. For more information about how to keep your employees safe and secure, contact the experts at Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd today.



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## NEWS AND PROSECUTIONS

### Self-employed Trader Fined for Safety Failings

A self-employed trader was found guilty of breaching Section 3 (2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and was given 200 hours of community service along with a £918.02 fine. The trader had neglected to take the necessary safety precautions required to work at height while on scaffolding arrangements, placing himself and others at serious risk. In its investigation, the HSE found that the trader had been served a Prohibition Notice six months prior to this incident for breaching the Work at Height Regulations for a similar incident.

### Alton Towers' Owners Fined £5 Million Over Smiler Crash

The owners of the theme park Alton Towers were fined £5 million and ordered to pay £69,955.40 in costs after a rollercoaster collision injured 16 people last June. The incident occurred after the ride's engineers overrode its control system without verifying that it was safe to do so, which caused the occupied car to forcibly collide with a stationary car. In its investigation, the HSE found the central cause for the incident to be a lack of detailed, robust arrangements for making critical decisions, which includes training and fixing faults. The HSE emphasised in its official statement that the incident could have been easily avoided had the park implemented comprehensive safety systems.

### Scrapyard in BBC Series Prosecuted Over Worker Injury

The Scrappers Ltd, a Bolton-based scrapyard, was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £26,687.88 in costs after an employee suffered a serious head injury. The employee was working on a raised car to remove its catalytic converter when the petrol saw he was using spun in his hands and hit him in the face. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company had not provided the worker with any sort of formal training, which may have contributed to him not using the appropriate tool designed for this specific type of work, nor was the work appropriately supervised. The HSE investigators concluded that the incident would not have happened had the company developed and implemented a safe system of work.

### Manufacturer Fined £1 Million Following Worker's Death

Parker Hannifin Manufacturing Ltd was fined £1 million, ordered to pay £6,311 in costs and a £120 surcharge after a worker was crushed to death by falling machinery. The worker was moving a large milling machine when it overturned and killed him. In its investigation, the HSE found that the company had not properly assessed the potential risks associated with the task nor had it provided the worker with the training necessary to successfully complete the task.