

HSE SAFETY CORNERSTONES

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Commuter Chaos: Reduce Employees' Transport Woes With These Steps

While many employees find themselves stressed at work during one point or another, recent [research](#) revealed that simply getting to work is now half the battle. Of those who take public transport or drive to work, 25 per cent reported feeling stressed as a result of their daily commute, while 18 per cent said their travels to work made them miserable. Not to mention, 10 per cent of those who feel this way reported being less productive at work as a result.

It is critical for you to take your employees' work-related stress seriously, as untreated stress can result in increased sick days, decreased productivity and serious mental health complications such as depression or anxiety. Nearly 70 per cent of employees said they feel their employer could do more to decrease commuter stress. Don't let your workplace become a statistic. Use the following tips to encourage a more positive commuter experience and reduce travel stress:

- Encourage flexible starting times to help workers avoid a high-traffic commute.
- Offer workplace incentives that encourage cycling or walking to work.
- Maintain proper changing facilities so that employees can comfortably walk or cycle rather than doing so in a uniform or professional attire.

For HSE guidance on reducing work-related stress, click [here](#).

Keep Your Future Workforce Healthy and Safe by Preventing Portable Device Risks

For many, looking down at our portable devices in a hunched, unsupported position is common practice. However, research revealed this daily occurrence is a major culprit behind the significant increase in youth musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The British Chiropractic Association [found](#) that recent years have shown an increase in patients under the age of 30 with neck and back pain. In fact, 45 per cent of young adults said they suffered these symptoms as a result of technology use.

This rise in MSD prevalence, especially among youth, is a serious concern for employers as their upcoming workforce will likely suffer more severe complications from workplace tasks, resulting in decreased productivity. Protect your current and future workforce with these steps:

- Offer [resources](#) that inform employees of the risks of portable device use.
- Encourage portable device best practices for employees, such as looking at screens in an upright position, using proper spine support if sitting in a chair while using a device and moving around every so often to avoid stiffness.
- Offer workplace [programmes](#) that encourage proper posture and promote less screen time, such as yoga, a mindfulness class or outdoor activities.

For more information on portable device risks and tips from the HSE, click [here](#).

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HSE News and Prosecutions

Manufacturing Company Fined After Employee Lost Multiple Fingers

A decorative panel manufacturing company has been fined £45,225 and ordered to pay costs of £1,612 after a worker suffered an injury when using an industrial saw. When the employee reached inside what he believed was a viewing hole to clear waste offcuts from sawing a medium density fibreboard, a drive and chain sprocket trapped his fingers. As he pulled his hand away, three fingers were severed. Further investigation revealed that the company failed to identify the hazard posed by the hole.

Council Fined Following Asbestos Exposure at Local Primary School

Kent County Council has been fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £21,500 after an investigation revealed asbestos exposure in a local primary school. An environmental health officer noticed during a routine food inspection that asbestos flue and rope were hanging from the ceiling. Further investigation revealed the flue and rope had been disturbed, as they were originally attached to a steriliser unit that was removed. In addition, the council failed to provide asbestos management training to both the caretaker and head teacher. For HSE guidance on managing asbestos, click [here](#).

Cheese Company Fined After Employee Falls Through Fragile Roof

A company has been fined £8,000 following an employee suffering a serious injury from falling through a fragile roof. The employee was asked to remove a dead mouse from an unfloored area, and did so by crawling along ceiling battens. After placing his foot on a fragile board, the material gave way and he fell 2.5 metres to the ground. Further investigation found that the company lacked control measures for safely crossing the unfloored area.

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