



Playing it safe

The Health & Safety Executive's new 'Better Business' campaign wipes out the misconception that a good health and safety regime need be a chore.

The 'Better Business' campaign is raising awareness, particularly with smaller businesses, about the real business benefits of introducing better health and safety practices into their workplace. One of the key drivers for the campaign is the fact that 600,000 employees take time off each year as a result of accidents or ill health. This costs employers, on average £1,200, each

time. This has a real knock-on effect on business, and for small businesses, can add up to a significant dent in profits. Having a good health and safety programme at work can save money and increase efficiency, and it can be very easy to implement.

The HSE's Debra MacLeod says: "We are trying to get the message across that implementing a good health and safety regime needn't be really

expensive or very difficult to do, but it can have some real bottom-line benefits - helping businesses save money or become more efficient in the work that they do. We're conscious that, for small businesses in particular, it can be an issue in understanding, both what their legal requirements are, but also in terms of thinking about how to introduce good practice. A misconception exists that implementing



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good health and safety procedures will be difficult and expensive, and that is a barrier we want to overcome.”

Debra advises: “The best starting place for small businesses who want to improve their health and safety is to look around and identify the key risks to staff, in terms of accidents and ill health. Are there things to trip over? Are you asking people to carry heavy boxes that may result in them injuring their back? Have a good look round and talk to your workforce. They are the best people to be able to tell you where these risks exist and how to handle them. Once you have identified the risks, they can be very easy to manage, for example, make sure no boxes are stacked in awkward places or that employees know to mop up any spills they see.”

Debra adds: “We have lots of information on our website on how to carry out a risk assessment within your company. Sometimes the terminology can be a bit frightening, but essentially, it’s just about going out, looking at the risks and deciding what to do about them. You also have to make sure the outcomes you identify are actually implemented.”

So, it’s not difficult to ensure your employees are safe, and effective precautions which will really make a difference need not be costly or time-consuming.

Visit the HSE website on: www.hse.gov.uk/betterbusiness for more information.



MENTOR EXPERT OPINION
by Russell Corlett

One of the most important reasons for managing health and safety is the economic aspect. The costs associated with accidents and ill health are much greater than most small and medium-sized companies realise.

Russell Corlett, Head of Health and Safety at Mentor, knows that this is not understood or not addressed by industry. He says: “The costs associated with not managing health and safety should be a driving factor - clearly the human cost in suffering is foremost - however, the financial cost to businesses is substantial. It’s not just the direct cost of an accident or ill health. Most companies will only consider days lost and wages - it’s the indirect costs which really hit the Company financially.” Failing to manage health and safety can result in expensive insurance costs, compensation costs, poor staff morale, increased stress on other employees and perhaps most importantly, the increased risks of accidents - these are only a few indirect costs to business.

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Russell wholeheartedly supports the HSE’s campaign to try and wipe out misconceptions that health and safety procedures are an expensive luxury and are difficult to implement - in other words they hold up the job. Statistics prove basic slips and trips are one of the major causes of incidents which result in people being off work. These incidents can easily be avoided when all employees follow basic health and safety procedures. He says: “It’s all about vigilance from every employee; it’s not just the managers who are responsible for health and safety. Legally, all employees have a responsibility”

He adds: “Mentor will conduct a health and safety compliance audit for the business. This will identify any failings in the management of health and safety, which in turn becomes the company’s action plan to improve health and safety. Support is also given to customers to allow them to undertake their own assessments.

Our 24 hour advice line is also available to customers giving them access to expert advice at any time - day or night.

If you are interested in finding out more about our Risk Assessment Training then please contact our Training Hotline on 0870 606 1036.

REPORTED NON-FATAL INJURIES
30,213 major injuries to employees were reported in 2004/05, rate of 117.7 per 100,000. This was down 2% on the previous year. Over a third were caused by slipping and tripping.
Source: Health and Safety Statistics 2004/05

If you are interested in finding our more about what our Health & Safety service can do for your business, then please contact Mentor Services on 0870 606 1036. You can also contact the Health & Safety advice line number on 08705 723 389.

