

Why Manage Health & Safety?

Every working day in Great Britain at least one person is killed and over 6000 are injured at work. Every year three-quarters of a million people take time off work because of what they regard as work-related illness. About 30 million work days are lost as a result.

Accidents and ill health are costly to workers and their families. They can also hurt companies because, in addition to the costs of personal injuries, they may incur far greater costs from damage to property or equipment, and lost production.

With very few exceptions, employers have to have liability insurance cover for injuries and ill health to their employees. They will also have insurance for accidents involving vehicles and possibly third-party and buildings insurance.

However, insurance policies only cover a small proportion of the costs of accidents. Costs not covered by insurance can include:

- Sick-pay;
- Damage or loss of product and raw materials;
- Repairs to plant and equipment;
- Overtime working and temporary labour;
- Production delays;
- Investigation time;
- Fines.

HSE studies have found that uninsured costs outweigh those covered by insurance policies. In a wide range of business sizes and activities, the total uninsured losses from day-to-day accidents ranged from twice up to 36 times the total paid in insurance premiums in the same year; the average was around ten times the amount paid in premiums.

So in some cases, you could think of accident costs like an iceberg, with the majority of the losses uninsured and hidden below the water line. Directors and managers can be held personally responsible for failures to control health and safety. Can you afford such failures? Do *you* really *manage* health and safety?

Reference to HSE Document "Managing Health & Safety Five Steps to Success"

Legal responsibilities of employers

Health and safety law states that organisations must:

- Provide a written health and safety policy (if they employ five or more people);
assess risks to employees, customers, partners and any other people who could be affected by their activities;
- Arrange for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures;
- Ensure they have access to competent Health and Safety advice;
- Consult employees about their risks at work and current preventive and protective measures.
- Failure to comply with these requirements can have serious consequences – for both organisations and individuals. Sanctions include fines, imprisonment and disqualification.
Under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 an offence will be committed where failings by an organisation’s senior management are a substantial element in any gross breach of the duty of care owed to the organisation’s employees or members of the public, which results in death. The maximum penalty is an unlimited fine and the court can additionally make a publicity order requiring the organisation to publish details of its conviction and fine

Reference to HSC Document “Leading Health & Safety at Work”

Health and Safety Management Systems and Standards.

Dealing with all the challenges facing your business can be complex and time consuming.

When you're under pressure, it's all too easy to look for a quick fix rather than the best solution or to forget important health and safety issues. A Health and Safety Management System helps you take control. It sets out how to handle key activities, so that everyone knows the right way of doing things. It also lets you apply a consistent, structured approach to tasks and see what's working well, and where you could make improvements.

Benefits of Health and Safety Management Systems.

Taking a systematic approach to management makes managing your business both easier and more effective. You work out the best way to handle each key activity and make sure that everyone uses the same approach every time.

A consistent approach like this reduces the number of mistakes and the cost of correcting problems. It also reduces the level of risk and ensures that you comply with legislation. This can positively influence your business:

- Improved health and safety performance by your business will reduce the costs associated with accidents and incidents.
- Improved awareness of regulatory requirements reduces the chance that you will commit any offences.
- If employees see that you are actively looking after their health and safety, relations and morale will improve.
- The public see that you are taking a responsible attitude towards your employees. This improves your image and helps generate positive PR for your business.
- Improving the efficiency of your business reduces your costs.
- Banks and investors may be more willing to finance your business if you can show that it is well managed.
- Business partners have more confidence in your business. Larger companies and government agencies may only buy from businesses that can show effective management systems.

Reference to Business Link "Safety Management Systems"