

Workplace fatalities increase - how safe is your business?

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- 147 workers killed at work (an increase of 6 since 2017/18)
- 69,208 injuries to employees reported through businesses under the HSE reporting scheme RIDDOR
- 28.2 million working days lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury
- £15 billion estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions (2017/18)

The figures make it very clear how important it is that South West businesses maintain a focus on health and safety. The HSE encourages a common-sense and practical approach to achieve this. The core elements are:

- strong leadership and management;
- a well-trained, skilled workforce;
- an environment where people are trusted and feel involved.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to put in place arrangements to control health and safety risks. As a minimum, businesses should have in place procedures to meet the legal requirements, including:

1. a written health and safety policy (if five or more people employed);
2. assessments of the risks to employees and any other people who could be affected by a business's activities;
3. arrangements for the effective review of the preventive and protective measures that come from a business's risk assessments;
4. access to competent health and safety advice;
5. providing employees with information about the workplace risks and how they are protected;
6. consultation and training for employees in how to deal with the risks and ensuring adequate supervision.

The consequences of failing to comply with these obligations can be significant for organisations and individuals. HSE investigations carry significant costs under their Fee for Intervention scheme (FFI). If the HSE find a material breach of health and safety law, an organisation will have to pay for the time taken to identify and rectify any defect. Businesses who comply with the law, or where no material breach is found, will not be charged FFI.

If a conviction ensues, court sanctions can include substantial fines, imprisonment (for individuals) and company directors' disqualification. In addition, there is the likelihood of significant reputational damage to the business and to the morale of employees. Investigations take time and can go on for many months and even years.

Please keep a strong focus on health and safety.

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