



Wilkins Safety Group

Monday, 28th April 2014

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



This week we thought we would tell you about the HSE's "Healthy Workplaces" Campaign which is looking at the issue of **Stress at Work** and what you need to do to comply.

We also look at a couple of recent HSE cases for you to consider. These look at the risks from [workplace machinery](#) and [working at heights](#)

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Work related stress.....

During 2014-2015, the HSE is promoting a "Healthy Workplaces" Campaign – This will largely look at how companies manage stress

Stress at work is a major issue but together we can successfully manage and prevent it. [The Wilkins Safety Group](#) can work with you and help you prevent work related stress and comply with the law.



What is work related stress?

Work related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them. Stress, including work related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as more errors.

Stress can hit anyone at any level of the business and recent research shows that work related stress is widespread and is not confined to particular sectors, jobs or industries. That is why all companies, large or small, must take the appropriate approach to tackle it.

As a responsible employer you need to have a management system in place to tackle work related stress; this system should develop a high level of health, well-being and organisational performance. This approach helps those who have key roles in promoting organisational and individual health and well-being to develop systems to prevent illness resulting from stress.

Definition of stress

Stress can hit anyone at any level of the business and recent research shows that work related stress is widespread and is not confined to particular sectors, jobs or industries. HSE's formal definition of work related stress is:

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work."

Stress is not an illness – it is a state. However, if stress becomes too excessive and prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop

There is a difference between pressure and stress. Pressure can be positive and a motivating factor, and is often essential in a job. It can help us achieve our goals and perform better. Stress occurs when this pressure becomes excessive. Stress is a natural reaction to too much pressure

A person experiences stress when they perceive that the demands of their work are greater than their ability to cope. Coping means balancing the demands and pressures placed on you (i.e. the job requirements) with your skills and knowledge (i.e. your capabilities). **For example**, if you give a member of your team a tight deadline on a project they feel they have neither the skills nor ability to do well, they may begin to feel undue pressure which could result in work related stress.

Stress can also result from having too few demands, as people will become bored, feel undervalued and lack recognition. If they feel they have little or no say over the work they do or how they do it, this may cause them stress.

Causes of stress

HSE has identified six factors that can lead to work related stress if they are not managed properly:

- **Demands** - Employees indicate that they are not able to cope with the demands of their jobs.
- **Control** - Employees indicate that they are not able to have a say about the way they do their work.
- **Support** - Employees indicate that they don't receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors.
- **Relationships** - Employees indicate that they are subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work.
- **Role** - Employees indicate that they do not understand their role and responsibilities.
- **Change** - Employees indicate that the organisation fails to engage with them frequently when undergoing an organisational change.

It is important to understand each of the six factors and how they are related to each other, as this can influence the amount of stress an individual experiences:

Signs and Symptoms

Stress can cause changes in those experiencing it. In some cases there are clear signs that people are experiencing stress at work and if these can be identified early, action can be taken before the pressure becomes a problem. This may make it easier to reduce and eliminate the causes.

It is important that everyone looks out for changes in a person's or a group's behaviour. However, in many cases the

changes may only be noticeable to the person subject to the stress and so it is also important to look at how you are

feeling and try to identify any potential issues you may have as early as possible and take positive action to address them; this may be raising the matter with a line manager, talking to an occupational health professional or your own GP.

Stress can show itself in many different ways:

Emotional symptoms Increased emotional reactions - more tearful or sensitive or aggressive,

Loss of motivation commitment and confidence mood swings.

Changes from your normal behaviour Changes in eating habits, Increased smoking, drinking or drug taking 'to cope',

Changes in attendance such as arriving later or taking more time off.

Please note these are indicators of behaviour of those experiencing stress. They may also be indicative of other conditions. If you are concerned about yourself please seek advice from your GP. If you are concerned about a colleague/employee try to convince them to see their GP.

Managers may need to manage staff exhibiting some of these signs differently. You are particularly looking for changes in the way people behave that could be linked with excessive pressures.

Evaluate the risks – Explore problems and develop solutions

Or in simple terms – Do a risk assessment. How you choose to evaluate the risks will be dictated by your organisational structure and the way you have chosen to approach the matter.

We suggest that you should:

- consult employees to discuss problem areas in more detail;
- work in partnership with employees and their representatives to develop actions to take;
- ensure that issues affecting individuals are addressed;
- feedback results to managers, employees and employee representatives, with a commitment to follow-up; and
- record what you have done

What to do next

The Management System should be concerned with the prevention and management of common health problems and the drive towards good jobs to enhance the performance of your organisation.

Since the process is continuous, it is envisaged that the evaluation and monitoring activities will merge naturally into everyday management.



Whether you use the Management System approach or an alternative approach to risk assessment, it is important that this is seen as part of the normal day-to-day activities of your line managers, and is integrated into their role as far as possible.

Of course the cause of an employee's stress may not be work related, (for example matrimonial problems, death in their family etc.) Obviously in such cases you, as the employer cannot be deemed responsible and it is up to you what support you offer your employee.

[Health4Work](#) is a link to an external website. The free Health for Work Adviceline for Small Business in England - helps you to quickly and effectively address the issue of employee health, minimise the impact of staff illness, and provide essential support to staff with physical or mental health issues

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West Midlands firm in court over dangerous machinery risks

A West Midlands company that makes roller shutters has been fined after an employee severed part of his finger in an unguarded machine.

The 36-year-old, of Rowley Regis, was working at the Brierley Hill factory of P&D Group Services Ltd, which trades as IRSP (Insulated Roller Shutter Projects), when the incident happened on 25 September 2013.

Dudley Magistrates' Court heard today (23 April) that the employee, who has asked not to be named, was operating a rolling mill, which folds flat metal strips into hollow tubes to form the individual parts of the shutter.

When a dent started to appear on the product, he tried to feel which component was causing the problem when his glove got caught and his finger was pulled into the roller.

He suffered severe crush injuries and the top of his finger had to be amputated to below the first knuckle. He was off work for seven weeks but has since returned to the company doing the same job.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the machine had been unguarded for some time.

P&D Group Services Limited, of Old Bush Street, off Level Street, Brierley Hill, was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay a further £1,414 in costs after pleading guilty to breaching Regulation 11 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector John Glynn said:

“This was not an isolated incident on a single day. Lack of guarding had persisted over a period of time meaning there was an inevitability of someone being injured at some point.

“This employee suffered a shocking and painful injury that was entirely preventable. It was P&D Group’s responsibility to ensure work equipment was safe and that dangerous moving parts were guarded. For some time the company required staff to approach the danger area around the rollers to set up and adjust the machine during production runs yet continuously failed to identify and address the matter of the missing guards.

“Preventing access to dangerous parts of machinery is a legal requirement and there are ample guidance and industry standards to allow dutyholders to achieve compliance with the law.”

Information on machine safety can be found at http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our_leaflets.html

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Worker suffers broken back after six-metre fall.....

A solar panel installation firm and its technical director have been prosecuted after an employee broke his back when he fell six metres through the roof light of a barn in Northamptonshire.

A 20 year-old man from Woolston, near Warrington, has been unable to work and has suffered constant pain and

depression since the incident at Norton Grounds, Daventry on 28 November 2011.

Northampton Crown Court heard that he fell while installing solar panels for Alternative Energy Installations Limited, which has since gone into liquidation.

Soft floor material in the barn, used for horse training, helped to break his fall, but he was still hospitalised for four weeks with a serious back injury. The incident has had a significant impact on his life.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated and prosecuted the firm's technical director, Ian Black, of Denbigh, Wales, for failing to control the risk of falling through fragile roof materials.

Crawling boards and safety netting were subsequently used to continue the job after HSE served a Prohibition Notice ordering urgent safety improvements in the aftermath of the fall.



Alternative Energy Installations Limited, registered with Hodgsons Accountants of Park Road, Timperley, Cheshire, was today fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £27,000 in costs after being found guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Ian Black, of Henallan Street, Denbigh, Wales, was fined £7,300 and ordered to pay £6,700 in costs after pleading guilty to the same charge at an earlier magistrates' court appearance.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Peter Snelgrove said:

"This fall could have been fatal and was entirely and easily preventable. As it is, the incident has dramatically affected a young man, starting out in life, and he has not worked again since. He has been affected personally, emotionally and physically and has had to change his whole way of life. He will more than likely need to retrain and his loss of self-confidence has had a drastic effect on his social life.

"The director was aware that the roof lights were fragile, but failed to put any measures in place to prevent falls, despite another worker asking if they would be wearing safety harnesses, at which Mr Black laughed.

"The fact that they were able to overcome the problem so simply afterwards, by using crawling boards and safety netting, shows how easy it was to prevent the incident.

"Alternative Energy Installations Limited should have ensured that the work at height was properly planned and that workers had the right protective equipment and had been trained in its use."

Last year more than 6,300 employees suffered major injuries after falling from height at work. **Working on roofs account for almost a quarter of all workers who are killed in falls from heights**, and falls through fragile materials like sky lights account for more of these deaths than any other single cause. Many others are seriously injured and are left with life-changing disabilities.

Information on preventing falls is available at http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our_leaflets.html

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For further information about health and safety in your industry, please go to <http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk>

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If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



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