

# HSE SAFETY CORNERSTONES

MARCH 2017

## Health and Safety Prosecutions Against Directors Have Tripled In One Year

Since the new guidelines from the Sentencing Council came into force in February 2016, the number of health and safety prosecutions against directors has tripled and UK businesses have seen a dramatic rise in the value of health and safety fines. In fact, in 2016, the largest 20 health and safety fines totalled £38.6 million. This is a significant increase, especially when compared to the previous two years, whose largest 20 fines totalled £13.5 million in 2015 and £4.3 million in 2014.

These new guidelines place a much higher burden on directors and senior managers for ensuring health and safety in their organisations, and make it increasingly likely that they could go to prison for both intentional breaches or a flagrant disregard for their responsibilities.

Avoid these new debilitating fines by conducting a thorough risk management and health and safety review of your premises and policies. In addition, you should solicit the input of your employees, since asking them to identify their health and safety concerns can be invaluable in finding hazards that would not have been obvious to upper-level managers. Contact [CABE Insurance Services](#) today to ensure that your organisation is protected from these potentially crippling fines.

## Half of Workers Don't Know Basic H&S Rules

According to the HSE, last year 144 employees were killed at work and 1.3 million people suffered from a work-related illness. Yet, a staggering 58 per cent of employees are unfamiliar with their organisation's health and safety (H&S) practices, according to a study conducted by international safety barrier manufacturer, A-SAFE. What's more, is that 60 per cent of polled employees admitted that they do not always follow all of their company's H&S practices. This is especially troubling as a majority of the polled employees were unable to correctly identify common safety symbols displayed around their workplace.

To ensure that your employees are informed and prepared for a health and safety incident, be sure to follow these three practices:

1. Provide employees with annual, basic first-aid training. This should include what to do during common workplace injuries—such as back and head injuries—as well as warning signs of common conditions—such as poisonings, concussions and mental health problems.
2. Explain what each safety symbol and sign means. In addition, you may want to post supplemental signs in order to help clarify safety guidance.
3. Schedule quarterly fire, severe weather, intruder and injury drills in addition to regular health and safety inspections.

## HSE News and Prosecutions

### HSE to Make Cost Recovery Dispute Process Fully Independent

The HSE has announced that it will consult on proposals to make its cost recovery dispute scheme, Fee for Intervention (FFI), fully independent. FFI was introduced in October 2012 in an effort to shift the cost of regulating workplace health and safety away from the public to the businesses that break the law. Until now, a panel that consisted of two members from the HSE and one independent person considered disputes.

### Construction Company Director Imprisoned After Safety Failings

The director of a construction company was imprisoned for eight months and disqualified from being a company director for seven years after he failed to take appropriate actions that resulted in a worker receiving serious burns. In its investigation, the HSE found that the director did not institute or enforce safe work practices, failed to administer first aid and did not inform the HSE of the incident.

### University of Northumbria Fined After Botched Experiment Nearly Kills Pupils

The University of Northumbria was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £26,468.22 after two students fell seriously ill following a laboratory experiment. As part of the experiment, two students ingested a caffeine solution, which mistakenly had 100 times the intended caffeine amount. Immediately, the students suffered from dizziness, blurred vision, vomiting, shaking and rapid heartbeat, and had to be rushed to hospital. In its investigation, the HSE found that the protocols set out for the experiment were not followed nor were they properly monitored.

Provided by:

**CABE Insurance Services**

0161 237 3199

[www.cabe-insurance.co.uk](http://www.cabe-insurance.co.uk)

