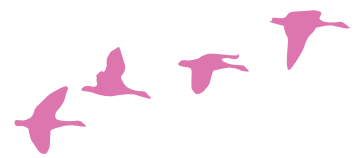


4directors

Director's Briefing: November 2005



Directors' Responsibilities for Health and Safety – Does Your Example make a Difference?

The HSE recently published the outcome of a recent peer review, in preparation of advice to Ministers on the issue of whether new statutory health and safety duties should be imposed on Directors.

In brief, the review sought to establish answers to the following key questions:

- What factors influence Directors to take responsibility for health and safety?
- What would the likely impact of any new legal duties placed on Directors be?
- How do Directors exercise their responsibilities at present and with what effects?
- Will your business benefit from these new laws?

Your Example WILL Influence Others

The review also sought to establish how important the attitudes and behavioural influences of Directors can be in establishing and maintaining a positive and beneficial health and safety culture. Incorrect prioritisation in any area of health and safety can have a considerable negative impact on the attitude of both your directly employed workforce and any contractors who may be engaged by your organisation.

Any perceived action that seems to belittle or trivialize health and safety issues is often exploited, with the attitude of many being: *"If the Director's don't need to do it, why should I?"*



Gavin Clarke, Director of 4See Risk Management Limited, commented: *"It is all too often the case that a Director can tangibly increase corporate liability as well as damaging health and safety culture by just one or two ill-conceived actions in the workplace, such as not wearing the correct PPE or ignoring*

a safety warning. This is frequently after Directors have approved the investment of a considerable amount of time and money establishing what should and shouldn't be done, rendering this investment useless."

The evidence provided in the review suggested that Directors **do** exert an important influence over the health and safety management and performance within their organisations. It also indicated that their commitment to taking responsibility for corporate issues is often perceived to be problematic by other managers.

What Do I Need to Do?

To overcome this issue, it is vital that Directors are FULLY aware of the way health and safety is managed within their organisation. All prohibitions and procedures must be positively endorsed at the highest level.

For your safety management system to be most effective, it should be seen to take priority. A good understanding of this issue and full endorsement from company Directors should tangibly reduce your liability.

One of the most important influences on Directors actions, in relation to health and safety are those giving rise to individual, personal and legal liabilities. However, development of a 'positive' health and safety culture which improves the motivation of all should be considered as being much more beneficial to your business.

To improve your understanding of corporate liability, 4See Risk Management regularly provide IOSH 'Directing Safely' training courses.

For more information on this or any other issues please contact us on ...

01908 255909 or enquiry@4seerisk.com.

