

# An example of a stress policy

## Introduction

We are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy will apply to everyone in the company. Managers are responsible for implementation and the company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

## Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

## Policy

- The company will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The company will consult with Trade Union Safety Representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- The company will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- The company will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- The company will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company’s agreed stress management strategy.

## Responsibilities

### Managers

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking. Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.

- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

### **Occupational health and safety staff**

- Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

### **Human resources**

- Give guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

### **Employees**

- Raise issues of concern with your Safety Representative, line manager or occupational health.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

### **Safety representatives**

- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- Safety Representatives must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- Safety Representatives must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- Safety Representatives should be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR.
- Safety Representatives should be provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any Trade Union training relating to workplace stress.
- Safety Representatives should conduct joint inspections of the workplace at least every 3 months to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

### **Safety Committee**

- The joint Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- The Safety Committee will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

**Signed by**

**Managing Director:**

**Date:**

**Employee Representative:**

**Date:**