

Accidents and Incidents: Management Briefing

What is the issue?

The latest statistics compiled by the Health and Safety Executive indicate there were 148 workers killed at work in one year with a further 114,000 other injuries to employees being reported under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

All accidents and incidents, no matter how minor, need to be investigated to some degree to ensure that it can be assured that they are less likely to reoccur in the future and to assist in the monitoring of the health and safety management system.

Certain types of more serious incidents need to be recorded or reported to the HSE Incident Contact Centre under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Key considerations

- Deaths and listed specified injuries to any person affected by the work activity
- over seven day injuries to employees, or self-employed working on an employers' premises
- specified reportable diseases
- dangerous occurrences
- certain gas incidents involving fuel gases.

Legal duties

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979
- The Social Security Administration Act 1992

What is reportable?

Although not reportable, it is a legal requirement for records to be kept for over three day injuries to employees and self-employed working on an employer's premises.

Recommendations for employers

- Ensure your organisation has an Accident Book available at each location or an equivalent means of recording accidents to employees (that has been approved by the Department of Work and Pensions)
- ensure that the reports are evaluated and filed confidentially once completed
- produce quarterly and/or annual reports showing accident trends
- ensure that your organisation has an agreed process for accident investigation. For larger organisations it is recommended that the procedure is documented and includes clear instructions for managers on the actions to take in response to accidents including escalation arrangements
- ensure that your organisation has arrangements to promptly identify incidents which are reportable under RIDDOR, arrangements for reporting these within required timescales and for maintaining records
- ensure that you have trained first aid personnel and equipment.

Case Law

Supermarket giant Tesco was prosecuted for not reporting staff accidents properly at two of its Berkshire stores for incidents, which took place in 2009 and 2010.

Council officers discovered Tesco had failed to report two employee accidents at its Warfield store and another at its store at The Meadows in Sandhurst.

The failures were uncovered during an investigation into the retailer's failure to stop an unsafe working practice that involved using a metal plate to unload vehicles at the Warfield store.

Tesco was fined £34,000 after pleading guilty to three breaches of Regulation 3 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. (These Regulations were those in force prior to the current 2013 Regulations).

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