

Health and Safety Bulletin

Office health and safety

Over the past couple of months there have been several new publications associated with office health and safety – this provides a summary of them

Office temperature

A recent poll on behalf of the company Andrew Sykes has found that approximately 2% of office hours are wasted due to the temperature being inadequate, potentially costing the UK economy more than £13bn annually. Approximately 29% of the workers surveyed estimated they spend between 10 and 30 minutes each day not working due to the temperature being uncomfortable.

About 44% of respondents stated they needed to bring extra clothing into the office and 28% that they needed to make hot drinks more regularly to cope with the temperature. 10% of female respondents admitted to bringing a hot water bottle into work!

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations require the temperature of the workplace to be reasonable with the accompanying ACOP specifying 16°C where no rigorous physical effort is required for the work. However, it also indicates comfort may depend on air movement and relative humidity.

The ACOP was updated and republished in 2013 and is available free at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>.

Ozone exposure

Ozone can be released into the air from some office equipment such as laser printers and copiers, or from equipment such as electric or ion generators used to improve air quality or to provide odour suppression.

The effect on those exposed to ozone can vary, depending on their sensitivity, but it can irritate the respiratory tract (i.e. nose, throat and airways).

The HSE have recently updated their guidance on the ways to control exposure available free at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eh38>.

European campaign - Healthy workplaces manage stress

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has announced its next health workplace campaign as health workplaces manage stress.

The European Agency has launched a website to support the campaign at <http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/en> and as the UK focal point the HSE have also launched a website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/european/index.htm>.

The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the health problems caused by work-related stress and how the HSE's Management Standards – these represent a set of conditions that, if present, reflect a high level of health, well-being and organisational performance – can help manage this risk.

The HSE website includes links to show organisations how they can get involved in the campaign and how those that have a good approach to managing stress can enter the European Good Practise Awards.

Articles in this newsletter:

- Office health and safety

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