

Why health and safety is important to your business



Workplace health & safety is all about prudently managing risks to protect your workers & your business. Good health & safety management is characterised by strong leadership involving your managers, workers, suppliers, contractors & customers. Globally, health & safety is also an essential part of the movement towards sustainable development.

Why is it important ?

Here are ten reasons why health & safety is important for your business:

1. It is morally right to ensure your workers return home safe & healthy at the end of every working day.
2. By protecting your workers, you reduce absences, ensuring that your workplace is more efficient & productive.
3. Research shows that workers are more productive in workplaces that are committed to health & safety.
4. Reducing down-time caused by illness & accidents means less disruption – and saves your business money.
5. In some countries, health & safety legislation is criminal law & you are legally obliged to comply with it. Legal breaches can result in prosecution, fines & even imprisonment of senior executives.
6. To attract investors & partnerships you may need to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability & corporate social responsibility, which will include how you protect your workers.
7. Increasingly, customers want to buy products & services that are produced ethically. You also need to think about the work practices throughout your supply chain & deal only with ethical suppliers that protect their workforce.
8. More & more, job hunters – particularly New Generation – seek roles with employers who share their values. Without strong corporate responsibility & sustainability practices you may struggle to attract or retain the best employees.
9. A good health & safety record is a source of competitive advantage. It builds trust in your reputation & brand, while poor health & safety performance will directly affect profitability & can result in loss of trade or even closure of the business.
10. Good health & safety at work secures long-term benefits for you, your business & the wider community.

5 things you can do to improve health & safety in your workplace

1. Find out more about risk management – from various free & paid resources available from credible sources online.
2. Lead from the top. Workers are much more likely to get involved & comply with controls if senior management make it clear that health & safety is taken seriously by your business. Actively discourage negative behaviours such as taking risks to save time or effort.
3. Improve health & safety competence in your business. So many training courses are available for all levels.
4. Get your workers involved in risk assessment: this will increase 'buy-in' and ownership of their own health & safety. Set up health & safety representatives, and if they are already established, support them more visibly.
5. Implement a health & safety management system for your business. This should include an overall policy setting out your commitment, responsibilities allocated to individuals & your arrangements detailing how you will actually control your risks.
6. The UK's Health & Safety Executive publishes its freely-available standard [HSG 65 Managing for health and safety](#) or there is the international standard [ISO 45001](#).