



## Safety Bulletin 73

### Stress at Work

Employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.

#### What is stress?

HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

Employees feel stress when they can't cope with pressures and other issues. Employers should match demands to employees' skills and knowledge. For example, employees can get stressed if they feel they don't have the skills or time to meet tight deadlines. Providing planning, training and support can reduce pressure and bring stress levels down.

Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an employee can cope.

There are six main areas of work design which can effect stress levels. You should manage these properly. They are:

- demands
- control
- support
- relationships
- role
- change

Employers should assess the risks in these areas to manage stress in the workplace.

#### Signs of stress

Stress is not an illness but it can make you ill. Recognising the signs of stress will help employers to take steps to stop, lower and manage stress in their workplace.

#### Protecting employees

To protect employees from stress at work, employers should assess risks to their health. Example stress risk assessments may help employers in small businesses.

You may need to develop individual action plans for employees suffering from stress.

Employers may also find HSE's Management Standards helpful. The standards help identify and manage the six causes of stress at work.

### Help for employees

If employees feel stressed at work they should talk to someone, for example their manager, trade union representative, GP or occupational health team.

You can find the relevant guidance for you [here](#).

Should you require any further assistance or guidance around Stress within your workplace and how to manage it, please contact us on [info@wpsafety.co.uk](mailto:info@wpsafety.co.uk) or 01268 649006



**Source: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**