



## EMPLOYMENT ISSUES UPDATE.

December 2007

Issue No 51

### SEASONS GREETINGS

For many Companies the arrangements will be well underway for festive celebrations. These events provide an excellent opportunity to congratulate staff for their achievements and have a good time. Whilst the majority of events will go smoothly and everyone involved will have a good time, employers need to be aware of the potential pitfalls of the party season.

Employment legislation is there to protect employees from discrimination or unfair treatment. Therefore employers need to ensure that they protect themselves from claims relating to harassment or bullying.

#### Top tips for managing the festivities:

- Make it clear that conduct at the event will be monitored and any seriously inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with via the disciplinary procedure. Senior managers should set a good example with their behaviour and keep an eye on things.
- Keep in mind the diversity of your workforce to ensure that all staff feel welcome at the event. Remember employees with disabilities and their access needs.
- Consider whether a daytime or evening event is most convenient to the majority of attendees.
- In the case of a lunchtime event, be clear whether a return to work is expected and therefore whether the consumption of alcohol is acceptable.
- At events where alcohol is provided make every effort to prevent drink driving by organising transport home.
- Ensure that the content of any professional entertainment is appropriate and not offensive to the audience.
- Avoid alcohol fuelled discussions with employees about pay and promotions that you may be held to.

It is important to leave staff in no doubt as to what is and is not acceptable behaviour. Most importantly, make sure you follow a fair disciplinary process with those who behave inappropriately.

By choosing an appropriate venue, entertainment, moderating alcohol consumption and taking into consideration the needs of both the employer and employee I am sure that your event will be a big success.

Your consultant will be able to support you with setting expectations for your staff in relation to your event and to support you in the unlikely event of an incident occurring at the event. Call our HR team for further advice.

Liz Rushmer, HR Consultant

### THE MYTH: Workers are banned from putting up Christmas decorations in the office



#### THE REALITY:

Bah Humbug! Each year we hear of companies banning their workers from putting up Christmas decorations in their offices for 'health and safety' reasons or requiring the work to be done by a 'qualified' person.

Most organisations including HSE and local councils manage to put up their decorations, celebrating the spirit of Christmas without a fuss. They just sensibly provide their staff with suitable step ladders to put up decorations rather than expecting staff to balance on wheelie chairs.

Source: Health and Safety Executive

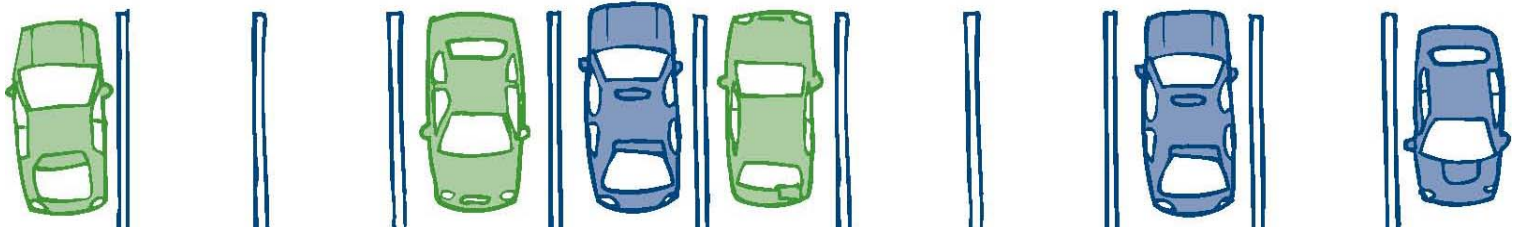
Christmas is a special time and does not need to be considered a health and safety mine field or an accident waiting to happen. All that is required at this time of year is a little common sense and good risk management to ensure that things do not end in injury or tragedy because of the extra hazards that appear at this time of year.

The following advice on decorating the workplace should be taken into account, along with your existing health and safety procedures:

- Remember under the work at height regulations, ladders can be used for light work of short durations. So use them to put up the Christmas lights! Use a stepladder to put up office decorations, there should be one somewhere in most organisations.
- Make sure Christmas tree lights meet modern safety standards or you may end up setting fire to your tree. Always ensure that tree lights operate at a reduced voltage rather than 240 volts, the lower the voltage the lower the risk normally.
- Don't hang any Christmas lights across metal filing cabinets, as they may get caught in the door mechanisms and cut through the insulation.

Page 1/2

## Ever wished you could park your worries?



- Don't obscure emergency exit signs with decorations. Newer staff and any party guests may not be familiar with your building's procedures for an emergency.
- Buildings are often crammed with electrical appliances, which could be a fire hazard if their air vents get blocked. Remember basic fire safety - if it burns, keep it away from ignition sources. In effect this means hang any tinsel well away from lights and other sources of heat, such as computers and heaters.
- Around 1,000 people are injured by Christmas trees each year, so be careful when putting them up. Make sure they are secure, and won't be knocked by people passing by or pulling cables.
- Check that tree lights are turned off when you leave the building, to avoid this being 'the last Noel' you celebrate in that building as most organisations never recover from a serious fire.
- And finally remember you do not need to have any basic food hygiene qualifications to leave the mince pie, milk and carrots out for Father Christmas and Rudolph. Please remember to leave them a safe distance from the chimney to prevent any unwanted slips, trips and falls though!!!

For any further Health and Safety advice, please do not hesitate to contact our Health and Safety team on 01206 752100 or email us at [consulting@parkcity.co.uk](mailto:consulting@parkcity.co.uk)

**Ashley Williams, Health and Safety Consultant**

## HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING COURSES

IOSH, a chartered body, is the guardian of health & safety professional competence. The Institution regulates and steers the profession, maintaining standards and providing impartial, authoritative guidance on health & safety issues.

Park City Consulting Limited is licensed by the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) to deliver two of its training courses, namely the 'Managing Safely' four-day course and the 'Directing Safely' one-day course.

### IOSH Managing Safely

The 'Managing safely' course is for those required to manage safety and effectively in compliance with both their organisation's policy and best practice in health & safety. The course aims to ensure that safety requirements are appreciated by people employed as line managers and to

enable them to review their own departmental systems for safety, introducing new controls or implementing changes, as appropriate, to ensure safety in the workplace.

### IOSH Directing Safely

Likewise, the 'Directing Safely' course – for small and medium sized enterprises aims to ensure that people at the most senior levels appreciate health & safety. This course reflects the principles embodied in:

- The Health & Safety Executive's guidance 'Successful Health & Safety Management' (HSG65).
- The Turnbull Report ('Internal Controls: Guidance for Directors on the Combined Code').
- The DeTR/HEC's 'Revitalising Health & Safety' strategy statement.

This course is intended for people with strategic responsibility for determining and implementing effective health & safety management within an organisation. The term 'small and medium sized enterprises' applies to organisations with fewer than 250 employees.

On completion of these courses, delegates will have gained an understanding of the moral, legal and business case for embracing health & safety management in a proactive manner, having also acquired guidance on effective risk management. There are no prerequisites for enrolment on either of these courses.

Our next 'Managing Safely' course will be delivered in two blocks of two days, commencing on Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 January 2008, with the final two days delivered on Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 February 2008. Preferential rates for existing clients apply at £395 + VAT per person which includes IOSH registration, workbook and IOSH certificate, following successful completion. This course is available to all other delegates at a rate of £595 + VAT per person.

Our next 'Directing Safely' course will be delivered on Wednesday 12 March 2008. Once again, preferential rates for existing clients apply at £325 + VAT per person, with a rate of £375 + VAT per person for all other delegates.

For more information about any of our training courses or to make a booking, please contact Kelly Halls on 01206 752100 or email [kelly.halls@parkcity.co.uk](mailto:kelly.halls@parkcity.co.uk) or visit our website.

Page 2/2

## Advice?

For further information on implementing these changes in Employment Law and Health and Safety legislation make a little space for Park City now. Call us today on 01206 752100.

## Free Business Health-Check?

Would you like a Human Resources or Health and Safety check free of charge for your business? Call now on 01206 752100.



# Park City

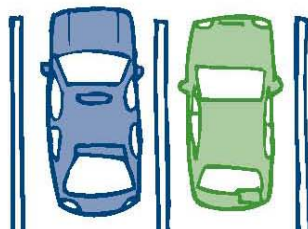
**We park your worries. You drive your business.**



Park City are experts in all areas of Human Resource Management. For the brochure of your choice, call us now.

- Employment Issues
- Health and Safety
- Tailored Training

IMPORTANT: This document is only intended as a general statement of the new law and does not constitute legal advice. No action should be taken in reliance upon it without our specific legal advice.  
© Copyright Park City Consulting Limited, October 2006



Park City Consulting Ltd  
894 The Crescent  
Colchester Business Park  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO4 9YQ

T 01206 752100  
F 01206 752400

E [consulting@parkcity.co.uk](mailto:consulting@parkcity.co.uk)

[www.parkcity.co.uk](http://www.parkcity.co.uk)

