

The **LOW**down Tips for start ups

This week: managing health and safety

When it comes to managing health and safety in a new company, planning ahead will enable you to eliminate health and safety problems before they begin.

Accidents, injuries, claims, disruptions to your business, time spent dealing with injured employees, investigating accidents and dealing with claims or prosecutions by the Health and Safety Authority can all eat into your profits.

A high number of claims can also raise your Employer's Liability Premium, but all of the risks you face in this area are preventable.

If you manage health and safety effectively, you will have all of your employees at work,

no accidents, no claims, no disruptions to your business and no extra costs.

Employees who feel valued and safe reward you with higher morale and improved productivity. By protecting your employees, you protect yourself, your profits and ultimately your business.

Think about your premises, the equipment you plan to use, the work tasks you want employees to carry out and any chemical substances that will be part of your process.

Get the best employees you can and buy the safest or best equipment and raw materials you can afford.

Risk assessment

Look at each task and iden-

tify the hazards to your employees and who is at risk and then put in control measures to eliminate, minimise or control those risks as far as is reasonably practicable. The Health and Safety Authority B-Smart system will help you to do all of this - [besmart.ie](http://www.besmart.ie)

Consult with staff

Involve and consult your employees as much as possible in getting to grips with health and safety problems. Management still have the legal duty to manage health and safety, but ideas that employees come up with will be accepted far quicker by them than those imposed by management, as long as they are practical and workable.



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Get outside help

You may need the help of a qualified, competent safety consultant to advise you if you have specific hazards, substances or processes. Do your

homework on the consultants you are considering and insist that they be full corporate members of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), which is the professional body for health and safety practitioners. Full corporate membership of IOSH is a badge of competence and you can be assured that you are dealing with someone who knows what they are doing, is competent, insured, etc.

Mainstream

Ultimately you need to 'mainstream' health and safety into the planning and management systems you have in your business. Build it into all job descriptions, targets, objectives and have it as

a standard item at all team and management meetings. Investigate all near-misses, accidents and incidents in order to learn and prevent reoccurrences.

Provide training

Provide health and safety training for all, particularly management and team leaders, and hold everyone to account for their health and safety performance. Keep all training records, machinery maintenance records and fire evacuation records so you can prove you are doing all of the right things to protect your employees.

Mary Darlington is director of Darlington Consulting, darlington.ie

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Planning

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Mainstreaming

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Train everyone and hold them accountable

Provide health and safety training for all, particularly Management and Team Leaders and then hold everyone to account for their health and safety performance. Keep all training records, machinery maintenance records and fire evacuation records so you can prove you are doing all of the right things to protect your employees.

Poor health and safety costs money.

Accidents, injuries, claims, disruptions to your business, time spent dealing with injured employees, investigating accidents and dealing with claims or prosecutions by Health and Safety Authority all eat into your profits and can be prevented. If you have a high number of claims it can also raise your Employer’s Liability Premium.

Benefits of health and safety management

If you manage it effectively you will have all of your employees at work, no accidents, no claims, no disruptions to your business and no extra costs. Employees who feel valued and safe reward you with higher morale and improved productivity.

By protecting your employees you protect yourself, your profits and ultimately your business.

ENDS.

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