

Policy Continuity and the Importance of Staff Involvement

Many golf clubs have Health & Safety policies in place but unfortunately they vary widely and therefore their usefulness to the management and staff is limited.

The most common situation we find is that the policy was drawn up some time ago, usually with professional help, and left on the shelf. The document is therefore not being consulted and reviewed on a regular basis, as it must be to ensure a safe working environment, as well as, more importantly, not being compliant with current legislation.

OTHER INSTANCES OFTEN FOUND ARE ALSO WORTH MENTIONING.

- The policy is not site specific to your golf club. i.e. it is a copy of another golf club document with the name changed, or a company has produced a generic document to sell with little or no work carried out in terms of matching the document to the golf club which it covers.
- The staff are not sufficiently involved and consulted at all levels and therefore view Health & Safety, at best, as being a necessary evil instead of something which protects them in the work place.

SO LETS LOOK AT EACH POINT IN TURN.

1. If your policy is not current, active and reviewed annually as a minimum, make provision for this to happen.

2. Ensure your policy relates exactly to your golf club - in areas of risk assessment, whether in the clubhouse or on the golf course for instance, this is absolutely vital.

3. The staff must be involved - department heads in the first instance, but all staff must have some input - this makes the manager's job easier in the long term.

With the staff involved Health & Safety becomes part of the daily routine and ultimately inherent in the culture of the club - when this happens it is no longer viewed as a necessary evil but something to be welcomed.

By bringing your policy up to date and involving the staff in all the necessary work involved everyone's working life becomes much more manageable and therefore easier - and of course safer.

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Quick Guide To Sick Pay

It is a misconception that employers have to pay employees full salary sick pay. The only sick pay an employer has to pay is statutory sick pay. Any payments over and above this are at the discretion of the employer and will be detailed in your contract of employment.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR STATUTORY SICK PAY (SSP)?

To qualify for SSP you must be

- Aged 16 or over and under 65.
- Sick for at least four or more days in a row (including weekends and Bank Holidays). This is known as the period of incapacity for work.
- Earn, before Tax and NI, an average of not less than £79 a week (earnings are averaged over an eight week period before sickness began).
- Must notify employer of absence.

HOW MUCH WILL I GET?

The standard rate of SSP is £68.20 a week for a maximum of 28 weeks. SSP is a daily payment and will be paid for the days that you normally work (qualifying days). It is not paid for the first three qualifying days of sickness (certain exceptions apply) - it is the fourth day of sickness that triggers the SSP entitlement.

HOW TO TELL YOUR EMPLOYER YOU ARE SICK?

You should tell your employer you're sick as soon as possible (More than seven days and you may forfeit your right to SSP). Check your employee handbook for your employer's requirements. An employer can insist you if you tell them:

- In person
- By a set time
- On a special form
- On a medical certificate
- More than once a week during your sickness

After seven days of sickness you will be asked to provide evidence of sickness, which is usually a doctor's note.

WHAT IF I DO NOT QUALIFY OR SSP ENDS

You should ask your employer for form SSP1, which they should fill in and give to you. You then need to send this to your social security office to claim incapacity benefit.

For more detailed information go to the department of work and pensions website of www.dwp.gov.uk or ring the legal helpline on 0800 068 1893.