

## WORKPLACE STRESS

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With businesses facing increasing financial pressures in the current economic climate, employees may become worried about their own jobs or others within their immediate family. The uncertainty and loss of control regarding the future may become a source of stress in certain individuals.

Other factors that can cause stress at work, known as stressors, are:

- Too little or too much work
- Bullying
- Work roles
- Management and business organisational styles
- Work life balance
- Interpersonal relationships with other work colleagues
- No control over work content and pace.
- Physical environment of the workplace

It should be recognised that stress is an essential part of life in that it can be in some cases be exhilarating e.g. when on a roller coaster or meeting a challenging deadline but also can be deflating when things do not go as we expect them to. It is only when these feelings are excessive over a period of time that it can lead to ill effects on people's health. Actions to control stressors should be taken before this occurs.



It is important to recognise that people are different in that not all people are the same and that tasks relished by some are considered to be extremely stressful by others.

It is important for employers to be vigilant for the signs of employees under stress such as:

- Sudden unusual absences
- Sudden poor time keeping
- Mood swings from previous disposition
- Employees smelling of alcohol at work
- Changes in personality
- Neglect of appearance and clothing

Stress at work for whatever reason will lead to poor performance and mistakes which will affect the business as well as having adverse effects on individual's health and possibly theirs and others safety at work.

Employers have a duty to carry out a risk assessment of their work activities that will identify if employees are being exposed to excessive stress and where required put in place control actions to eliminate or reduce this to an acceptable level.

Where the cause is external to the business or where it might be due to an uncertain future, the ability to talk these issues through with someone in confidence either within or external to the business will be of benefit in reducing the overall effect on the health of affected individuals.

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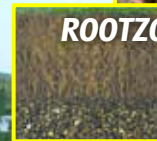
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