



STRESS – IDENTIFY AND PLAN TO REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS

WLD.014

Description of Event

High pressure work environments, such as VE or DCOs, resulting from a combination of limited resources, tight budgets and inadequate programmes.

Population at Risk

Designers, Construction Workers and Maintenance Workers

Hazardous Activity and Residual Risk Description

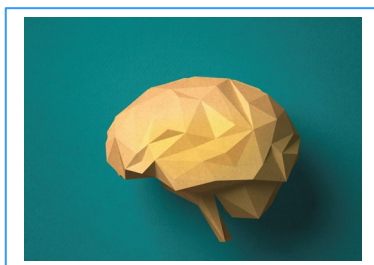
- High pressure environments causing work-related stress, due to lack of resources, unreasonable delivery programmes, delays, or budget issues.
- Work-related stress has an assessed residual risk of an almost certain likelihood of moderate harm.

Potential consequences

- Work-related stress could result in delays to projects through sickness leave or staff losses due to long term mental health problems.
- The residual risk requires careful consideration of resource, budget and time at all times with additional support and stress management to be put in place for all those working on projects.

Safety Hub [Alert Database](#)

- Category Mental health and wellbeing, filtering out sub-category 2 Guidance and Coronavirus has 3 safety alerts relating to mental health.



Potential Mitigation Measures

Effective works planning

- Ensure there are enough resources for the job and if the best approach is taken.
- For example, Network Rail often complete work off-site to minimise time spent in higher pressure environments such as railway possession.



Mental Health First Aid

- St John Ambulance recommends having as many mental health first aiders as are required for physical health.
- 2-to-3-day courses are provided by MHFA England and MHFA Wales for Mental Health First Aiders and Public Health Scotland for Scottish Mental Health First Aiders.

Stress Risk Assessments/Wellness Plans

- A specific stress risk assessment or wellness plan could be developed as a proactive approach to dealing with workplace related stress. A wellness plan is a personalised document which details how a person behaves when experiencing stress and what mitigations have been agreed to help resolve this as well as who the trusted contacts are.

Taking annual leave

- A survey done by Glassdoor in June 2022 found that 3 in 5 workers had not taken their full leave entitlement in the past year with 1 in 5 under-25s having taken none at all.
- Employers should encourage staff to take their annual leave across the year rather than taking it all at once.
- Ensure that when staff are on leave, they remain on leave and do not feel pressured to check work emails by adequately planning for absences.



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Case Studies

Development Consent Orders (DCOs) Case Study

- DCOs can cause high pressure environments when, for example, a project team has made unrealistic promises to secure consent or does not fully understand the DCO application and has written “We will comply with all the requirements of the DCO”.
- This can be mitigated against by ensuring those submitting the applications have engaged with the design and construction teams. Selecting contractors, designers and others who have worked on similar schemes may also help to alleviate stress by ensuring those working on the scheme have a realistic understanding of what will be required to fulfil the DCO requirements.

Mobilisation Periods Case Study

- Projects sometimes overrun in the design phase which results in time from being taken away from the construction phase of the program. This creates additional stress and pressure on construction workers to make up for lost time whilst also still delivering the project on the agreed completion date.
- It is therefore important that programmes and mobilisation periods are planned safely to ensure any delays are not going to place additional pressure on construction teams.
- Clients should be made aware of the impact of decisions relating to the programme in respect to the teams working on the design and construction stages.

CDM Regulations

- CDM requires Clients (Reg 4(1)) to ensure adequate resources, time and budgets are available, all of which are contributors to Mental Health and stress concerns.
- All other CDM duty holders have responsibility to manage these criteria (Reg 9(1), 11(2) & 13(2)) and inform the Client when they are in anyway inadequate.
- Risk assessment undertaken on tasks in line with the Management Regulations.
- Ensuring groups of people affected by works are communicated with in an appropriate way for them, ie, consultations, leaflets, letters etc, reduces stress and anxiety.

Further Guidance and Reading

- [HSE - Tackling work-related stress using the Management Standards approach](#)
- [Out of Order: How to Save Projects from DCO Hell](#)
- [RtB 34 – Mental Wellbeing](#)
- [One Million Lives – Jacobs assessment tool and support](#)



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