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Don't slip up on home working!



With the unexpected snowfall this winter, employers should take extra care that they have adequate home working policies in place.

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This winter's snowfall has put compliance issues into sharp focus. Whilst employers were sensibly advising staff to work from home rather than brave the elements in dangerous conditions, many of them didn't have home working policies in place.

A recent case in France where an employer was successfully sued by a member of staff, who fell off a roof whilst working from home, illustrates how vulnerable companies can be and could open the way for similar cases in the UK.

It's not just where the cold weather is concerned where employers need to take care. An employee's home is an extension of the office, so it is an employer's responsibility to ensure that they have a safe working environment. This includes making sure there is a clear policy for home working, which states that employers should not undertake any activities which could put themselves at risk.

Although, it is unlikely that employees will be getting up on their roofs, there are other scenarios which could happen during the course of a working day, such as slipping on an icy path or driveway, which need to be considered. However, minor an accident may seem, it can easily snowball and leave the employer liable for thousands of pounds in personal injury claims.

There are also other responsibilities employers have, such as making sure an employee's work station is established and assessed, data protection issues in terms of the disposal of sensitive documents, IT security and the protection of personal details.

The British weather aside, there are many unplanned for situations, for example, where a employee requests to work from home due to unforeseen circumstances , which require a home working policy to be in place.

There aren't that many employers nowadays who don't have some form of flexible working in place. Home working is the way of the future and is the only way that businesses will get the right staff to do the job. The key thing for employers is to manage the process properly. This includes establishing internal communication procedures to keep staff motivated and agreeing the work they are undertaking in advance, so there is no misunderstanding of what is expected of them.

For more information and advice on home working policies and flexible working, please contact Debbie Taylor on 01225 486300.