# Stress Questionnaire

USDAW
HEALTH & SAFETY

# Stress in the Workplace

**Stress is not a new issue. However, in recent years it has become more apparent. It can be defined as 'environmental factors which exert undue strain or pressure on a person', and can be caused by numerous factors either at home or in the workplace.**

Stress from any source may affect an employee's health and their performance at work.

Causes of workplace stress can be associated with a wide range of factors. The nature of the job, or some aspects of it, may be potentially stressful. For example, there may be contact with members of the public whose behaviour can be unpredictable, abusive or even violent. This is especially relevant to Usdaw members working in the retail trade, with violent incidents in this sector becoming an increasingly serious problem.

Other jobs, by their very nature, are dangerous, involving potential exposure to chemical, biological and physical hazards which can cause both short- and long-term health problems. Boring, repetitive and monotonous tasks can also be stressful.

Other factors to consider are working hours and workload. Some people may be required to work shifts, or unsocial or excessive hours, whilst others feel they simply cannot meet targets they see as unrealistic. Many employees experience stress because they are unable to partake in any decision making in relation to their own job, thus feeling that they have no control at all over their destiny at work.

The working environment may contain a minefield of potential stressors: badly designed workstations; inadequate or inappropriate heating, ventilation or lighting; inadequate holidays; long hours; and even performance-related pay can be major sources of stress.

Each individual responds differently to the varying levels of pressure to which they are exposed, but when the pressure becomes excessive for the individual, it can result in physical symptoms. These symptoms vary enormously from one person to another in both frequency and severity: a headache after too many hours spent at a VDU screen, at one extreme, to stomach disorders (eg ulcers) and even heart disease at the other.

Other symptoms may include:

- Sleeplessness
- Irritability
- Backache
- Neckache
- Muscle Tension
- Anxiety
- Nausea

This in turn may lead to increased absenteeism, impaired work performance and a possible increase in workplace accidents.

It is clear that for the benefit of both employee and employer, a systematic approach to occupational health and stress management should exist.

If you wish to help identify stressors at your workplace, we have drafted a model questionnaire for you to circulate to members, which may help. You may want to draft your own questionnaire which asks more specific questions about your workplace.

We recommend that you ask members to complete the questionnaire anonymously, thus ensuring complete confidentiality.

Once you have analysed the completed questionnaires, you should be able to identify any important causes of stress in your working environment. If you feel that there is a stress problem, it should then be raised with management through normal company procedure.

For further copies of this Health and Safety Advice Sheet, contact your Area Organiser at your local Usdaw office.

More resources for Health and Safety Reps can be found at: **www.usdaw.org.uk/HSRepResources**

**Scan the QR code for more health and safety resources**

# Confidential Questionnaire: Stress Survey

Please ✓ the appropriate box(es) for each answer that applies.

## 1. Do you ever suffer from any of the following?

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| Headaches | | | |
| Anxiety | | | |
| Chest palpitations/pain | | | |
| Indigestion or nausea | | | |
| Sleeplessness | | | |
| Irritability | | | |
| Backache | | | |
| Neckache | | | |
| Stomach disorders | | | |

## 2. Do any of the following cause problems for you at work?

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| Noise | | | |
| Poor/inadequate lighting | | | |
| Excessive heat | | | |
| Excessive cold | | | |
| Overcrowding | | | |
| Poor ventilation | | | |
| Dust or fumes | | | |
| Poor maintenance of equipment | | | |

## 3. Do you find any of the following cause problems?

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shiftwork | | | |
| Inadequate breaktimes/mealtimes | | | |
| Unsocial hours | | | |
| Very heavy workload | | | |
| Unfair distribution of work | | | |
| Repetitive/boring work | | | |
| Meeting deadlines | | | |
| Job insecurity, eg threat of redundancy | | | |
| Poor supervision | | | |
| Under-utilisation of skills | | | |

## 4. Regarding working relationships, do any of the following cause you problems?

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poor relations with a supervisor | | | |
| Poor relations with workmates | | | |
| Harassment and/or discrimination | | | |
| Impersonal treatment | | | |
| Lack of communication from management | | | |
| Working with the public | | | |

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## 5. How much control do you feel you have over your job? Do you feel:

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| • You are able to plan your own work | | | |
| • You can participate in decision making for your own job | | | |
| • You have some control over the pace/content of your work | | | |
| • You have no control at all | | | |

## 6. Do you feel you:

| | Never | Sometimes | Often |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Are underpaid? | | | |
| • Are undervalued? | | | |
| • Receive appreciation for good work? | | | |

## 7. How do you feel about your job in general? (✓ one)

- I am completely happy in and enjoy my job
- I sometimes feel dissatisfied but generally enjoy my job
- Most of the time I do not enjoy my work
- I have no interest at all in my work

## 8. If you feel you are under stress, please ✓ which you feel is the main contributory factor:

- Problems outside work
- Problems at work

## 9. Please list below what you feel are:

a. The main causes of stress in your job

b. The effects that these have on other workers and yourself

c. The steps you think could be taken to ease the situation

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Our publications are regularly updated, view the latest version at:
**www.usdaw.org.uk/stressquestionnaire**