

‘Promoting Safety 24/7’

**Summary report of workshop held at Royal Mail Centre,
Birmingham 28th June 2006**

How far should companies try to influence the lives of their employees outside the workplace? This was one of a number of **key questions** put to representatives of occupational health and safety “higher performers” who gathered to talk about the positives, practicalities and potential pitfalls of a 24/7 approach to safety and accident prevention. (A list of participants in the event, which was RoSPA’s first ‘24/7 Safety’ workshop, is attached as annexe one.)

A presentation from RoSPA pointed out that nearly three million people of working age visited hospital Accident and Emergency departments in 2002 to seek medical treatment for an injury sustained at home or through a leisure activity. Figures for working **days lost** due to these injuries are not available, but, bearing in mind that there are an estimated 1.1 million cases of workplace injury (all severities) and 7.1 million working days lost as a result each year, the numbers of working days lost due to accidents outside working time are bound to be very much greater. And that does not take into account the days lost when employees stay at home to care for injured children or other relatives.

RoSPA wants to initiate a **national debate** to encourage discussion on how businesses and other organisations can help to tackle this problem and safeguard both their employees and their families from accidents outside the workplace. A draft discussion document has been prepared (which is being developed further in the light of the workshop).

RoSPA believes that re-focusing on ‘off-the-job safety’ and helping to prevent accidents to employees outside work offers a **new and exciting challenge** to organisations in the private, voluntary and public sectors which had already achieved high OS&H standards.

The model being advanced by RoSPA suggests **three tiers of intervention**: 1) wherever possible, encouraging the transfer of safety knowledge and skills from the workplace to other parts of an employee’s life; 2) using the workplace as a platform for delivering community based safety programmes and, 3) engaging in corporate proactive outreach to enhance safety in the wider community.

RoSPA is suggesting that: there is a **powerful business case** for action (including reducing the amount of **employee lost time** and decreasing threats to business continuity and staff morale); 24/7 safety is an important strand in **corporate social responsibility**; and that a 24/7 approach can ensure **continuity of safety culture** beyond the workplace. There are also strong links in this context with the **wider public health agenda** and the broader approach which the Government wants employers and other stakeholders to adopt to health work and well-being, particularly reducing sickness absence and long term dependence on benefits.

The 24/7 safety concept was generally welcomed by workshop participants and examples were cited of existing interventions that could come under a “24/7” umbrella, such as encouraging the transfer of ladder safety or manual handling techniques to the home. There were different views about whether a separate approach labeled “24/7 safety” was needed and whether or not it should be promoted as part of employee **well-being policy** or as an addition to **workplace health education** programmes such as those concerned with alcohol and drugs, diet, smoking cessation, exercise etc. It was agreed that a more **evidence-based approach** was needed, based on analysis of absence data, evidence from staff surveys, death in service data etc and that prioritisation of effort needed to be based on evidence of ‘what works’. It was important to sell the message to **key internal stakeholders** such as senior managers and trades union representatives since the practicality of implementing a new strategy in the midst of competing financial pressures raised obvious challenges.

Other key points which emerged in discussion included:

Organisations might be challenged to identify their **top 5 causes** of non-occupational injury.

Promoting safety outside work could focus on the **different safety needs** of younger workers, carers, those involved in higher risk leisure pursuits etc.

A 24/7 approach offered further opportunities to promote HSE’s ‘**Sensible Safety Principles**’ and thus help combat inappropriate risk aversion.

In this sense ‘Sensible Safety’ needs to be seen as a **key ‘life-skill’**.

If additional resources were available to promote safety outside work, there could be **challenges from workers’ representatives and regulators** that these might be better spent addressing established OS&H priorities in the business.

In this situation it might be easier for organisations to deliver community initiatives, perhaps as **part of CSR** and to link this to **CSR volunteering** policies.

It was no use organisations promoting ‘24/7 safety’ if they did not already have **robust OS&H management systems and culture** in place as a firm foundation for sustainable action.

There was a real need to **convince key internal and external stakeholders** of scale of problem and that interventions were likely to be worthwhile.

There was an obvious link with the duty of employers to address the health and safety of growing number of their employees who are **working from home**.

Organisations that were engaged in the HSE’s **Large Organisations Pilot Project (LOPP)** might be obvious candidates to approach.

There seemed to be a need for a range of offerings **and resources on different topics**.

To **take the discussion forward**, RoSPA will be revising its draft discussion document and sending it to key players. It will be: helping organisations to work towards **collecting and sharing data** on employee absences caused due to accidents outside the workplace; developing a **'24/7' area on RoSPA's website**; gathering **evidence of good practice**; and **linking key partners together** to share perspectives and information on what works. In the medium term RoSPA will be looking at how it can develop **packages and resources** as well as **generic guidance** on how to introduce and deliver '24/7 safety' programmes in different settings, partnering with external agencies where ever possible.

Comments on this project should be sent to me at rbibbings@rospa.com (tel 0121 248 2095).

Roger Bibbings
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3rd July 2006

Annexe one
Workshop participants

Annexe one

RoSPA Workshop on '24/7 Safety'

Wednesday 28th June 2006

Workshop Participants:

Lynne Ainge	Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
Roger Bibbings	RoSPA, Occupational Safety Adviser
Andy Chappell	Birmingham Health, Safety and Environment Association
Mus Choudhury	RoSPA, Product Manger, Marketing
Eve Codling	Eastriding of Yorkshire Council
Jean Coyle	Toyota UK
Mark Edmiston	Nexia Solutions
John Freer	South Staffordshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Wendy Green	RoSPA, Senior Events Coordinator
Dennis Guest	Reading Safety Group
Mark Hoare	Birmingham Health, Safety and Environment Association
Melvyn Hodgets	Royal Mail
Allan Holt	Head of Safety for Royal Mail Group
Louise Neel	RoSPA, Information Centre
Derek McMillan	Spingfields Fuels
Colin Morris	RoSPA, Home Safety Development
Frances Richardson	RoSPA, Marketing Manager
Jo Stagg	RoSPA, Press Officer
Errol Taylor	RoSPA, Deputy Chief Executive
John Vallender	RoSPA, LASER Programme Manager
Brad Wriglesworth	Saltend Cogeneration Company Limited