



Do you employ staff?

Do you have difficulty understanding your legal and contractual responsibilities as an employer?

Do employment problems keep you awake at night?

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## Email and Internet Use

### The Risks Involved

Email and the internet are commonly used at work. So what does this mean to you as an employer? If you allow your employees to have limited personal use of your computer systems, can you be sure that they are using computer resources appropriately?

What people say over the internet can cause risks for your company. Emails can quickly become informal with employees communicating as though they were face to face. Conversations can easily become inappropriate about colleagues and clients, and in some cases this behaviour is not just confined to private emails, but the public domain as well. Not only could this possibly result in bullying, harassment and discrimination claims, but it could also damage the public image of your company.

Finally, there could be a serious risk to the duty of care towards the young children placed in your care. Many companies including nurseries create websites to advertise their services. For a nursery this may involve taking photos of days out or activities with the children, but this can cause problems if you do not have the permission of the parents or guardians, once again potentially damaging your relationships with your customers.

### What Can Be Done To Prevent Them

Having the correct policies in place can reduce the likelihood of you having to encounter any of these risks in your workplace. As an

employer it is in your best interest to have structured policies which set out the rules your employees must abide by, e.g. when they are allowed email and internet access, which sites are permitted/prohibited, and when they are required to obtain parental consent for certain activities. The policies will also contain information on how you will manage your employees if these rules are broken.

In some circumstances it is acceptable for an employer to monitor its employees' email and internet usage, so long as this does not infringe upon a person's right to privacy. This can allow you to periodically check emails to ensure the system is not being abused by members of staff. However, it is important all employees are treated equally in this respect, unless you have due cause for suspicion.

Performance management is essential to ensuring employees conduct themselves in a respectable and professional manner with regards to your policies. By regularly managing the performance of your employees it is less likely rules will be broken or inappropriate conduct committed.

## How We Can Help

We can help you to deal with this increasingly common issue by providing you with an email and internet use policy, tailored to your company's needs. We can then work alongside this policy, helping you to manage the performance and compliance of your employees, or by providing training for you and your management team. We can also be there providing you guidance on which avenues to take and which action is available to you.

If you have any queries relating to any of the subjects raised within this newsletter then please don't hesitate to contact us at [hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk](mailto:hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk)

For clarification of any of the above updates or for advice and guidance on any HR and/or Health and Safety Concerns contact us by emailing [hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk](mailto:hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk) or by calling 02476 664092.

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