



**Health & Safety and
Employment Law
in your Practice
(Confused?)**

We can prescribe help.



Why Do I Need Health & Safety and Employment Law Advice

Health & Safety

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to provide a safe place and safe systems of work for both their employees and anyone else who comes into contact with their business e.g. the public, contractors etc. In addition to the Health & Safety at Work Act, the Health & Safety Management Regulations require that all work activities and locations are assessed for risk and that the risks identified are either removed entirely, or reduced by the introduction of control measures.

Owners/Partners ultimately hold the responsibility for Health & Safety in a Veterinary Practice. They may delegate the authority to carry out Health & Safety duties but they cannot delegate the responsibility. The fines for breaches of the Health & Safety legislation can be punitive and are up to £20,000 per offence and/or up to six months imprisonment for the guilty Owner/Partner.

Employment Law

Employment law is an extremely complex area. A wealth of existing legislation is being continually added to by new legislation.

Equal Opportunities legislation has grown significantly in recent years, including legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion and sexual orientation. Forthcoming legislation on age discrimination (due to be implemented in October 2006) will impact on many areas of employment including recruitment, benefits and retirement. As many high profile sex discrimination cases have shown in recent years, businesses potentially face unlimited damages awards in discrimination cases. The law places responsibilities on Owners/Partners with regard to compliance.

From 1 October 2004, the Employment Act 2002 made it a legal requirement for all organisations, regardless of size, to follow minimum discipline, dismissal and grievance procedures in certain circumstances.

These changes mean that where dismissal is the outcome of a disciplinary procedure, an employer's failure to comply with the minimum procedures will lead to the dismissal being automatically unfair, leading in turn to hefty financial penalties for the employer.

We believe the time is right for our customers to review their Health & Safety procedures and the wording of their employment contracts and operation of their disciplinary procedures to ensure not only that they are complying with the statutory requirements, but that procedures are being implemented in a practical and efficient fashion.

The NVS/Xact Standard of Health & Safety and Employment Law Compliance

Following some high profile cases where small companies have been ordered to pay substantial damages to employees following Health & Safety lapses in the work place, NVS have decided to give support to customers in achieving compliance on all Health & Safety and Employment Law issues. To achieve this objective NVS have appointed Xact Consulting to work with the customers to achieve the "NVS/Xact Standard of Compliance" This will ensure good Health & Safety and Human Resources practice is adopted in the work place.

Xact Consulting will contact each customer offering a free audit to check compliance. An advisor from Xact Consulting will visit the premises and complete the audit. A report will be issued following the visit which will highlight any areas of non-compliance. Xact will then quote our specially agreed price to bring your veterinary practice up to legal compliance level and to provide an on-going Health & Safety and employment law management system.

Health & Safety

The system includes:

1. A personalised Health & Safety policy covering the following areas:
General Policy statement, Organisation and General arrangements
2. A qualified Health & Safety advisor from **Xact** will visit the premises and carry out, in conjunction with the Owner/Partner all necessary risk assessments, preparation of policies and provide any training including DDA Plan and Asbestos Register.
3. A binder with all necessary Health & Safety information will be provided.
4. One off site visits to assist the Owner/Partner in the event of any serious incident.
5. Liaison with the relevant Local Authority on any issues or problems.
6. Staff Health & Safety booklets.
7. Annual visits to the premises by a qualified Health & Safety advisor from **Xact**, to update the risk assessments and the system.
8. Regular ongoing information updates for the Owner/Partner, relating to new or changes in legislation.
9. Access to the 24/7 telephone help line.

Employment Law

The system includes:

1. A review of Existing Documentation
2. The drafting of Contracts of Employment
3. The supply of a Human Resource and Employment Law Guide which is designed to provide you with a guide to employment procedures under UK law. This can be used as a day-to-day reference tool, as it provides an overview of the main areas of Human Resource Management. Included within the manual are suggested letters and documents for use in HR management. These can be amended to suit your individual requirements. The manual will be updated regularly to reflect changes within the law.
4. The supply of Employee Handbooks
5. All customers will have access to expert advice on any issues concerning Employment Law 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via our telephone helpline.

Who Are Xact Consulting

Xact Consulting Ltd are a dynamic Health & Safety and Employment Law consultancy specialising in providing Health & Safety, human resources and employment law solutions to businesses of all sizes and complexities.

Xact take the hassle out of such issues as Health & Safety Policy Preparation, Risk Assessments, Training, Drafting of Employment Contracts, Disciplinary Procedures and Employment Policies.

Health & Safety and Employment Law **Check List**

Check your compliance with current Health & Safety and Employment Law Legislation:

Health & Safety:

1. Have you a written Health & Safety Policy with detailed operating procedures? Yes / No
2. Have you provided Health & Safety induction training for all your employees? Yes / No
3. Have you carried out Health & Safety Risk Assessments and recorded them and instituted any necessary follow-up action? Yes / No
4. Have you a plan in place to deal with the Disability Discrimination Act – Access Requirements? Yes / No
5. Have you in place an Asbestos Log for your premises? Yes / No
6. Have you carried out a COSHH Assessment, recorded it and instituted any necessary follow-up action? Yes / No

Employment Law

1. Do you have Contracts of Employment for all your employees? Yes / No
2. Are you familiar with the current procedures on Disciplinary, Dismissal and Grievance as required under the ACAS code of practice? Yes / No
3. Are you aware of the potential scope of discriminatory behaviour in relation to legislation affecting Recruitment? Yes / No
4. Are you aware of the impact on your business on the forthcoming legislation on age discrimination? Yes / No

If your answer to any of these questions is 'No' your practice is at risk.

**CONTACT XACT CONSULTING LTD TO ARRANGE
AN INITIAL FREE COMPLIANCE AUDIT
ON
0845 665 3006**

