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Tighter Controls for Bouncers

According to a recent report, bouncers could find themselves out of a job with the introduction of new regulations that are managed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). These regulations also apply to wheel clampers, security guards and private investigators. All workers in the private security industry will have to obtain a compulsory new licence and will have to prove they have not been involved in any crime for up to five years. Under the Private Security Industry Act it will be an offence to provide a service covered by the legislation without a licence, to employ someone without a licence or falsely claim approved status. For more information please see BBC news.

On-line Pharmacies

A study released this month has raised concerns about the safety of buying drugs online. It finds that almost half of e-pharmacies fail to give adequate information about drugs and medicines that they sell. This study, carried out in Australia, examined approximately 100 Internet sites, and reported almost half of the sites failed to give any data about their products, and where data was available it was often inadequate. A separate study carried out in America also found that half the online pharmacies it investigated were unlicensed, giving their customers poor quality or incorrectly dispensed medications. For more information please see BBC news.

RSI and How to Avoid it

According to a recent report, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned

companies to take adequate measures to reduce RSI and musculoskeletal disorders, and has released new guidelines to help. People who spend a long time tapping at a keyboard can develop repetitive strain injury (RSI). This is caused by the strain put on the joints in the fingers, hands and wrists. Symptoms of RSI include soreness or tenderness of the fingers, wrists, elbows, arms or neck. If not treated it can give rise to a condition similar to arthritis, which can cause long-term disability. Good keyboard design and position, good typing technique and frequent breaks can prevent RSI. Preventative action can be easily taken and indeed for employers and insurers to ignore RSI may lead not only to compensation claims, but also to costs arising from sickness absences and reduced productivity. Businesses can choose between an easy-to-use checklist or a more complex guide that includes information on applicable legislation. *The law on VDUs: an easy guide* is a checklist for users to apply to company workstations to minimise health risks. The more detailed guide, *Work with display screen equipment*, is aimed at companies who are concerned about meeting their legal obligations. For more information please visit www.hse.gov.uk

EU and the New VAT Law

According to a recent report, in less than three months all e-commerce companies selling products in the European Union (EU) will be required to charge VAT, even if the seller is not based in the EU. This new European Union regulations will come into force in July. The new law, which was agreed upon almost a year ago, was not widely welcomed, especially by American companies, which will have to raise their prices for the European buyers. Complaints



have also been made about the widely varying VAT rates in the European Union, which can be as low as 15% in Luxembourg and as high as 25% in Denmark and Sweden. Under the new law, an e-tailer will charge VAT on all sales to EU customers at the rate of the country it is registered with. That country will in turn divide the revenues between the other EU countries according to where the sales were made.

ISO 9001:2000 Transition

Several business sectors have been warned by BSI Management Systems that companies may lose business if they fail to update to the new version of the Quality Management System Standard ISO9001:2000. They point out that companies may have difficulties meeting the quality needs of their customers, such as in the automotive sector, many of these will specify that suppliers must meet the new standard. The particular sectors highlighted are the UK glass sector, where only 5% of the 640 businesses have transferred, the UK paper making and printing sector where the number is 9% out of 1700, and the UK rubber and plastics sector where the number is 8% out of 1800. If you would like help and assistance with this transition please speak to your accreditation body. You can also visit www.qmt.co.uk for additional support and advice.

Emissions of Carbon Dioxide Down

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have announced that industry had cut the amount of carbon dioxide produced in 2002 by 13.5 million tonnes, more than 10 million tonnes above the targets agreed under the climate change agreements. In 2000 the government signed 10-year climate change agreements with 44 industry sectors, representing more than 5,000 companies. The sectors included, steel, aluminium, cement, chemicals, paper, food and drink – some of the most energy intensive industries. Defra said that the steel sector accounted for most of the cuts, but the other sectors still beat their own targets by nearly a million tonnes.

User Guides on the New European Standards for Aggregates

There are new European standards for aggregates. The conflicting British Standards on Aggregates will be withdrawn in June 2004 and to help companies that use or specify aggregates the BSI are releasing a series of guides. PD 6682 consists of 9 publications and will be available soon. They are aimed at helping companies use and apply the series of European Standards and include information on the provision of the EU Construction Products Directive (89.106/EEC). The 9 publications are:

- PD 6682 Part 1 Aggregates for concrete – Guidance on BS EN 12620
- PD 6682 Part 2 Aggregates for bituminous mixtures and surfaces treatments – Guidance on BS EN 13043
- PD 6682 Part 3 Aggregates for mortar – Guidance on BS EN 13139
- PD 6682 Part 4 Lightweight Aggregates for concrete mortar and grout - Guidance on BS EN 13055-1
- PD 6682 Part 5 Lightweight Aggregates for bituminous mixture sand surface treatments – Guidance on BS EN 13055-2
- PD 6682 Part 6 Aggregates for unbound and hydraulically bound material – Guidance on BS EN 13242
- PD 6682 Part 7 Armourstone Guidance on BS EN 13383
- PD 6682 Part 8 Aggregates for railway ballast Guidance on BS EN 13450
- PD 6682 Part 9 Guidance on the use of European test method standards

For more information on these guides and the standards to which they relate to, please see www.bsi-global.com

Sunday Times Good Hospital Guide

This guide provides information about NHS hospitals in the UK. The information comes from two main sources – the central Department of Health statistics and research carried out by Sir Brian Jarman, head of the Dr. Foster unit and emeritus professor at Imperial College London. It allows like-for-like comparisons between hospitals and has triggered work to improve ratings in hospitals that were previously identified as poor. The guide includes:



- Mortality Index – this is one indicator of the quality of clinical care in a hospital
- Doctors/100 beds
- Nurses/100 beds
- Waiting time performance – Inpatients
- Outpatients
- Cancer waiting times
- Hospital facilities and services – Beds
- Service and quality awards
- Emergency services
- Cancer services

This report shows that mortality rates in the UK are generally falling but some hospitals are significantly worse than others. For instance patients are twice as likely to die at Walsall than at Barts or The London. For further information see www.timesonline.co.uk.

Slump in Music Sales

Music sales are declining as illegal Internet copying increases say's the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). Figures released by them showed a 7% global fall last year and the slump is predicted to gather pace. The industry is blaming an inability to prosecute illegal file-sharing websites and the proliferation of CD copying. The music industry is pressing for laws to give it greater ability to take the operators of music-copying websites to court. It has already threatened Universities with prosecution if their students download music illegally using academic computer networks. However, the Recording Industry Association of America has recently lost a case against a file-trading service company. The judge likened the service as a VCR whereby the end user can use the recorder for both legal and illegal recording and therefore the company, having no direct control, was not guilty. Other factors will have an effect upon the IFPI figures including the high price of CD's in the UK.

Strategic Customer Satisfaction

Having trouble thinking strategically with regard to customer satisfaction, then try this tip from Elizabeth Shaw-Rowlands, an Examiner with the Institute of Quality Assurance. Imagine you're responsible for maintaining customer satisfaction on a

cruise liner - making sure the beds are clean, deck chairs are available, food is of the correct standard, etc. Well if the cruise liner happens to be the Titanic then strategic customer satisfaction thinking is making sure we're looking out for the icebergs. To learn more about strategic customer satisfaction thinking please visit www.customer-satisfaction.co.uk. This site describes a number of approaches that can be used to measure customer satisfaction and respond to customer feedback.

Measuring customer satisfaction is a key requirement in the new ISO9001: 2000 standard and this site might help you find an approach that would work for your organisation.

Pirate Software

In a recent poll carried out by IT continuity firm Lodestar, only 22% of business managers would tell their employer if pirated software was found at work. Further nearly 50% of them do not know whether their company carries out software audits. The anti-piracy body FAST have recommended that organisations carry out software audits to identify any illegal software. It has warned firms with unlicensed software that they could be taken to court even if the licensing laws were broken unintentionally.

QM&T's Special Offer – IQA Diploma in Quality

QM&T are offering a 10% discount to students who (pre-book and pay for) register and purchase all 6 modules of the IQA Diploma in Quality. For more information regarding these courses please visit www.qmt.co.uk or www.iqa.org