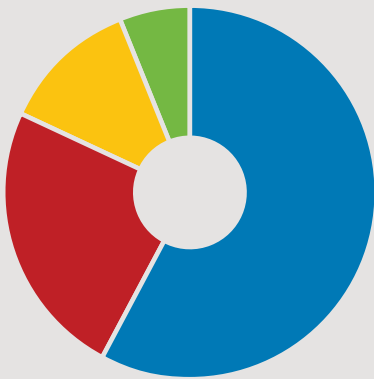


All's well

Is your board actively engaged with health and safety issues?



58%: Yes.

24%: No.

12%: Don't know.

6%: I'd rather not say.

The coalition Government's plans to resuscitate the UK economy are all based around making it simpler for companies to go about doing their business. One of the key facets of this plan is the streamlining of health and safety law – but is this actually going to make any difference? We asked the *Chartered Secretary/CSS* panel what they thought.

In terms of the cost of complying with

health and safety law, respondents were divided as to whether it had a significant impact on their business; 39% said that it did, while 52% said that it did not. One respondent gave valuable insight into the issue: 'It is critical to distinguish between inefficient regulation (of which there is very little) and inefficient application of regulation (of which there is more)'.

In terms of the board's involvement in this area, responses were encouraging – 58% said that their board is actively involved in health and safety, and only 24% said their board was not actively involved. Furthermore, 82% of respondents felt that health and safety policies were properly prioritised across their

organisation, and only 6% thought that they were not. One respondent's organisation takes a very efficient approach: 'We have a dedicated Safety Manager who is responsible for drafting all operational and occupational health and safety policies. There is a Safety Council, which meets quarterly to discuss all types of safety issues, and significant or potentially significant matters are reported to the board monthly'.

In order to gain further insight into this area we asked respondents what the most significant aspect of health and safety was for them. In many cases the answer depended on the sector in which they were working. One response was: 'We manufacture jet engines – ensuring they don't fail or fail safely', while another cited 'nothing significant – usual office risks'. Others spoke of risks regarding rail transportation, or the use of chemicals. One respondent commented that the hardest aspect of health and safety for them to monitor relates to a situation in which they send an employee to work for a client at their site, which means that the health and safety of that employee is harder for the company to control. Interestingly one respondent cited employee stress as the most significant aspect of health and safety for them.

Finally we asked if the company secretarial department has responsibility for the creation or maintenance of the health and safety policy. The majority (73%) said that the company secretarial department did not have this responsibility; however, 24% said that it did. The majority (78%) of those that said they were tasked with developing health and safety policy felt that they do have the appropriate support and resources to do so. Those who felt they were not sufficiently supported accredited this feeling to a lack of time and people.



Conducted in association with Company Secretarial Services

If you're a company secretary of a leading UK business, and you'd like to take part in or comment on future surveys, e-mail Caroline Evans at cje@blt.co.uk.