

# Client Update

## CONSIDERATION FOR MUSLIM EMPLOYEES DURING RAMADAN

APRIL 2021

**Ramadan is one of the most important religious celebrations in the UK with over 3.3 million Muslim citizens potentially observing strict rules.**

This year, during the period between Tuesday 13th April and Thursday 13th May, participants will fast, refraining from eating or drinking during daylight hours or around 19 hours. They may also pray during the night, so possibly sleeping for only a few hours.

### Workplace considerations

It is important for employers and managers to consider any possible impacts in the workplace and behind the steering wheel. Not eating and drinking during the day can sometimes lead to low blood sugar levels and dehydration. When combined with potential disturbances to usual sleep routines, it could mean that some employees may suffer from reduced concentration, tiredness, headaches and feeling lightheaded during the day. Due to these effects, some practicing Muslim professionals may be exempted such as airline pilots or surgeons.

As part of their duty of care, it is advisable for employers to carry out a risk assessment for anyone observing Ramadan to ensure their safety, the safety of work colleagues and members of the public. This can be especially important where employees are operating machinery or driving vehicles.

### Road Safety Risks

Road safety studies show that low levels of concentration can affect our reaction times and awareness behind the steering wheel, including reading road signs, speeding and braking.

Fleet managers should be aware of these types of risks and may want to have workplace conversations around how observing Ramadan could affect driver behaviour.

### Risk management

- Encourage staff to take more regular breaks and 'power naps' if necessary
- Where possible, allow staff to avoid travelling to and from work at peak commuting time
- With the Covid lock-down easing assess whether some individuals need to re-enter the workplace
- For drivers, manage schedules to reflect the effect on drivers observing Ramadan, recognising that long journeys may be more challenging
- Give some refresher training on defensive driving and keeping a safe distance away from the vehicle in front as rear end collisions are one of the most common and costly crash types

Information about Ramadan should also be communicated to non-Muslim employees to encourage a positive, supportive and safe working environment.

*The information contained in this bulletin is based on sources that we believe are reliable and should be understood as general risk management and insurance information only. It is not, and is not intended to be taken as, legal advice and/or advice with respect to any specific or individual situation and cannot be relied upon as such.*