

FSB

slams lazy HMRC campaign

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) today reacted angrily to a new advertising campaign by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The campaign urges employees who think that their boss isn't paying the right tax or National Insurance to call an HMRC hotline to report them. This follows a campaign in December 2005 that showed a plumber hiding under a sink to avoid paying tax. The FSB referred that advertisement to the Advertising Standards Agency because small businesses felt that this attacked the honest small business community, which is the vast majority, in its move against dishonest traders.

The FSB's members would support a drive to clamp down on rogue employers that undercut them by being dishonest and would also be happy to advise HMRC on how best to do so. However, the FSB fears that this advertising campaign will generate many malicious calls and divert resources from HMRC staff working to identify dishonest employers.

John Walker, FSB National Policy Chairman, said:

"This is the second time in just over a year that HMRC has launched a media campaign that demonstrates their complete lack of understanding of the world of business.

"They are right to seek out employers that are dodging tax - they dishonestly undercut our members who obey the law. However, this 'shop your boss' campaign will inevitably lead to some disgruntled employees phoning the hotline out of spite to see their employer tied up for weeks in red tape and inquiries by HMRC.

"It is a lazy way for a Government Department to do its job – effectively outsourcing its role to the workforce. But a hotline such as this will have to be staffed, with an office provided, when those resources and people could be much better employed targeting rogue employers in the field."



John Walker,
FSB National
Policy Chairman



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