

National Clampdown Targets Construction Industry's Poor Health Record

'Health as well as safety' will be the message as poor standards and unsafe work on Britain's building sites are targeted as part of a nationwide drive aimed at reducing ill health, death and injury in the industry.

During the month long initiative, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will carry out unannounced visits to sites where refurbishment projects or repair works are underway.

From 22 September 2014, HSE Inspectors will ensure high-risk activities particularly those affecting the health of workers, are being properly managed. These include working with harmful dusts such as silica and asbestos, and other hazardous substances. If unacceptable standards are found Inspectors will take immediate enforcement action. HSE is urging industry to 'think health' as over 30,000 construction workers are made ill by their work every year.

Philip White, HSE Chief Inspector of Construction, said: "Industry has made much progress in reducing the number of people killed and injured in its activities, but for every fatal accident, approximately 100 construction workers die from a work-related cancer.

During the recent health initiative, enforcement action was taken on one in six sites. Time and again we find smaller contractors working on refurbishment and repair work failing to protect their workers through a lack of awareness and poor control of risks.

This isn't acceptable – it costs lives, and we will take strong and robust action where we find poor practice and risky behaviour.

Through campaigns like this we aim to ensure contractors take *all* risks to their workers seriously, and not just focus on immediate safety implications. They need to put in place practical measures to keep workers both safe and well"

Further information about the Initiative, results of previous campaigns and safe-working in construction can be found online at: www.hse.gov.uk/Construction/campaigns/safersites/index.

During inspections, HSE inspectors will consider whether:

- risks to health from exposure to dust such as silica are being controlled.
- workers are aware of where they may find asbestos, and what to do if they find it
- other health risks, such as exposure to noise and vibration, manual handling, hazardous substances are being properly managed
- jobs that involve working at height have been identified and properly planned to ensure that appropriate precautions, such as proper support of structures, are in place
- equipment is correctly installed / assembled, inspected and maintained and used properly
- sites are well organised, to avoid trips and falls, walkways and stairs are free from obstructions and welfare facilities are adequate

Construction Company Fined £100,000 after Worker Run-Over by Nine Tonne Truck

A major construction company has been fined for safety failings after a worker was critically injured when he was run over by a nine tonne dumper truck.



(Generic Dumper Photo)

David Windsor, 62, of St George, Bristol, suffered life changing injuries, including severe brain injury, in the incident at a building site at Mount Wise, Devonport, on 7 October 2010.

He also sustained facial fractures, serious injuries to right arm, fractured ribs, a fractured pelvis, leg fractures and foot injuries all on his right side where the dumper ran over him.

The injuries were life changing. He spent two weeks in intensive care, a month in a high dependency unit and was finally discharged home from a brain injury rehabilitation unit in April, 2011 – more than six months later.

Oxfordshire-based JB Leadbitter was sentenced today (19 September) after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to adequately manage and control workplace transport.

Plymouth Crown Court heard that Mr Windsor, a delivery driver, was delivering a mortar silo to the Leadbitter site, a former MoD property where 159 new homes were being built. He was wearing high-visibility clothing, but was hit by the dumper as he was crossing the site to return to his lorry.

HSE established that there was no segregated, defined area provided for people on foot like Mr Windsor. JB Leadbitter, as the principal contractor for the site, had not produced or put in place a suitable traffic management plan to ensure the separation of vehicles and pedestrians using the roadway at the site.

JB Leadbitter and Co Ltd, of Grange Court, Abingdon Science Park, Abingdon, in Oxfordshire, was found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay full costs of around £100,000.

HSE Inspector Jonathan Harris, speaking after the hearing, said: "This terrible incident has left Mr Windsor with significant and lasting injuries and could easily have led to his death. It is unlikely he will be able to return to work again.

"Simple forethought and planning could have avoided this happening. JB Leadbitter failed to identify risks to site workers and visitors, such as delivery drivers, in their construction phase plan and made no provision for segregating site vehicles and pedestrians at the top end of the site. Other workers on this large site were frequently exposed to serious risks as a result of this lack of planning.

"Workplace transport incidents are the second most common cause of serious and fatal incidents in the construction industry, yet they could easily be avoided by having proper plans in place and provision for pedestrians on site."

On average, seven workers are killed every year as a result of collisions with vehicles or mobile plant on construction sites. A further 93 are seriously injured.

Further information about managing traffic on building sites can be found on the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/vehiclestrafficmanagement.htm

Fee for Intervention is Effective and Should Stay, Says Report

A scheme designed to shift the cost of regulating workplace health and safety from the public purse to businesses who break the law has proven effective and should stay, an independent report has concluded.

The report recognised that inspectors at the Health and Safety Executive have implemented 'Fee for Intervention' consistently and fairly since it started in October 2012, and found no evidence to suggest that enforcement policy decisions had been influenced in any way by its introduction.

The independent panel which conducted the review was chaired by Alan Harding, professor of public policy at Liverpool University. Other participants were representatives of the GMB trade union, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Department for Work and Pensions.

According to the report's authors, the professional approach adopted by HSE's inspectors has ensured any challenges raised by the scheme during its first 18 months were minimised. The evidence suggests the concerns voiced about FFI have not manifested themselves to any significant or serious extent and that 'generally inspectors and duty holders continue to work together in improving health and safety management'.

Judith Hackitt, Chair of HSE, said: "Both HSE and the Government believe it is right that those who fail to meet their legal health and safety obligations should pay our costs, and acceptance of this principle is growing. This review gives us confidence that FFI is working effectively and should be retained. We will continue to monitor the performance of Fee for Intervention to ensure it remains consistent and fair."

The report, published by HSE, along with associated research papers, concludes that "it [FFI] has proven effective in achieving the overarching policy aim of shifting the cost of health and safety regulation from the public purse to those businesses who break health and safety laws."

It also concludes that:

- Fears that FFI would be used to generate revenue have proven to be unfounded.
- While not popular with some inspectors and duty holders, it has been embedded effectively and applied consistently.
- There is no viable alternative that can achieve the same aims.

The report can be found on HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk/fee-for-intervention/

HSE Working at Height Safely Targets Construction

HSE is inviting representatives from the construction industry to a free, half-day event in Nottinghamshire on 3 October, HSE Working at Height Safely, aimed at slashing injury and death from falls.

The Working Well Together campaign, which was put in place to improve health and safety in the construction industry, is organising the HSE Working at Height Safely event to show how working practices can be improved and measures put in place to reduce the risk of injury from falls from height.

Falls continue to be the biggest cause of fatal injury in Britain's workplaces, and account for more than half of construction workplace deaths. In 2012/13, 25 of the 47 worker deaths in construction were the result of a fall from height.

On top of this, more than 4,000 major injuries such as broken bones or fractured skulls are reported to HSE each year by the construction industry. More than half of these serious injuries involve falls from height or from tripping over materials on walkways and are easily preventable.



(Generic Work at Height Photo)

Presented by HSE inspectors and East Midlands Working Well Together group, the event aims to raise awareness of construction-related risks with working at height, providing expert advice and guidance.

During the day, delegates will get the opportunity to see a series of demonstrations and presentations of safe working practices with fragile materials, the consequences of a fall, working with scaffolding, and ladder, aluminium tower and mobile access platform demonstrations.

"This event will be a real eye opener for those responsible for workers in the construction industry to learn more about safe practices and raise awareness of the risks relating to work at height," says HSE inspector Frances Bailey.

For more information, contact Ian Weekes on 0115 937 7500

Risk Management: A Different Perspective

What we consider to be a risk varies considerably from person to person. Ask a new or expectant parent what they worry about and they will give a very different answer to a final year university student.

A health and safety practitioner principally worries about threats to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and third parties who might be affected by work activities. Senior executives, in contrast, are juggling a plethora of incredibly diverse risks.

Some of those risks can be so significant that, if they are poorly managed, the viability of the whole organisation could be jeopardised. Health and safety is just one piece of the overall risk portfolio.

Winning over hearts and minds has to involve understanding another person's perspective. In that spirit, it might be useful to start from the premise that senior executives have a slightly different (and perhaps broader) perspective of risk.



Another key difference is that senior executives *want* to take certain risks. Expanding into new markets, taking over another company, tendering for a high profile but demanding contract or developing a new service or product line are examples of risks that some senior executives might actively pursue.

The greater the perceived benefits are, the more likely it is that an organisation will accept the risk. Obviously, some organisations have smaller appetites and the business benefits would have to be compelling, and the risks fairly small, to convince them to step out of their comfort zone.

Senior managers therefore routinely put the organisation's (and their own) resources and reputation on the line to help their company create and take opportunities to survive and thrive. The limits of how much they are prepared to stake will depend on their 'risk tolerance'.

The significance of the risks associated to poor health and safety performance can be lost amidst these other risks. We inevitably have to accept and manage some degree of health and safety risk when an organisation pursues business risks and opportunities.

A business wants to manufacture a new product and will purchase a significant amount of new and unfamiliar equipment: we cannot and would not want to prohibit this on the basis that it is introducing or increasing health and safety risks.

Senior executives need help and guidance in ensuring that if their decisions are creating health and safety risks, those risks really are justified and appropriately managed.

Risk management is a professional discipline in its own right, but the core principles are the same as health and safety. These disciplines rely on identifying and evaluating risks and finding proportionate ways of managing them.

They also rely on the same soft skills and leadership qualities to get people on board. Health and safety practitioners are therefore very well equipped to participate in and actively support the wider business risk management processes.

Getting involved in those discussions also gives practitioners an unparalleled opportunity to make sure that health and safety is firmly on the agenda when key business decisions are being made.

Extract taken from: 'The wider view', which will feature in the October issue of SHP.

Glasgow Firm Fined £200,000 after Worker's Fatal Fall

A Glasgow based company has been fined £200,000 after pleading guilty to a breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, which resulted in the death of an employee.

Mr Leslie Watson, an employee of SW Global Resourcing Limited, died after being thrown from a basket while working to cap and grout strengthening rods which had been inserted across the arches of the Annick Water Viaduct.

This involved work at height using mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs) positioned on concrete plinths which had been built to create level working surfaces. The plinths were built on sloping ground with the front ends of some of the plinths significantly higher than the immediately adjacent ground, but none of them were built with any end stops or edge protection.

Kilmarnock Sheriff Court heard in mid-September that, on the 13 April 2010, Mr Watson was working from the basket of a MEWP positioned at a height of approximately 13 metres (42 feet). The plinth that the MEWP was positioned on had been built with no end stop or edge protection to remove the risk of the MEWP falling from it.

The MEWP drove off the edge of the concrete plinth and overturned, throwing Mr Watson from its basket against a column of the Viaduct and from there to the shallow river bed. He died at the scene as a result of his injuries.

The case was investigated by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) with assistance from HSE. The investigating authorities found that no suitable and sufficient risk assessment had been carried out for the task and the system of work was unsafe. The accident could have been avoided had reasonably practicable precautions, in particular the use of edge protection, been taken.

SW Global Resourcing Limited pled guilty to contraventions of sections 2 and 33(1) (a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, resulting in the £200,000 fine.

Gary Aitken, head of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) health & safety division, said: "The company failed to ensure the safety of its employees and as a result of this Leslie Watson died.

This was an entirely avoidable tragedy which has left family and friends devastated at the loss of a loved one. "Hopefully, today's outcome will highlight the need for companies to keep the health and safety of their employees to the fore."

"SW Global Resourcing has a duty to all its employees to ensure their safety when working on our railways and on this occasion we found unacceptable failings. "Safety of those working and travelling on the railways will always be ORR's number one priority "and where failings are found the regulator will not hesitate to take action."