



**EASTWOOD
& PARTNERS**
INSURANCE BROKERS

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Eastwood and Partners Limited Insurance Brokers

Observations

HSE Launches new website to prevent work-related stress

The site includes updated advice and guidance and includes tools to prevent stress at work, a self assessment questionnaire for managers, case studies and practical examples of things that have worked for other organizations.

Are you a property Developer

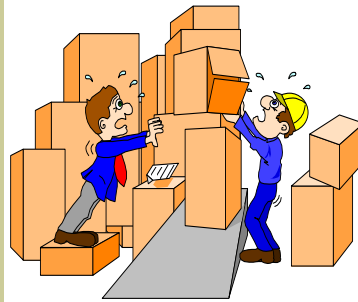
The HSE have published a quick guide to your legal responsibilities as a client under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Training

We are able to offer CIEH courses in **Manual Handling awareness, Risk Assessment Level 2 and 3 and Workplace Health Safety and Welfare level 1, 2 and 3**

We can also prepare bespoke courses to meet your needs.

We can assist you by guiding you in preparing your Business Continuity Plan



Many people die or are severely injured from falling materials in the workplace.

Most consider this risk to be construction based with items falling from scaffold onto persons below (that is why they are provided with hard hats!).

But these type of accidents (items falling) happen anywhere in what is most often places that we consider to be safe environments, for example an office, workshop, at home.

Badly stacked items can fall at

Dangers of falling objects

any time.

For example a stone yard failed to control the unloading operations in its yard when a worker was crushed to death under granite slabs being unloaded from a shipping container.

Others have been injured in builders merchants when a delivery vehicle pulled back its curtain and an unstable load fell out.

An apprentice died in a joinery workshop from serious head injuries when a stack of MDF boards fell on him while he was attempting to remove some of the boards.

In an office environment it is still often the case that items are stored in boxes on top of cabinets, resulting in persons trying to lower down an apparently light box only to find it

heavier than they thought and loosing control of it resulting in the box falling to the floor.

Storing items on pallets is also an area that should be fully examined and carefully monitored as in many cases employees are often not instructed in how to stack pallets safely.

DO NOT TAKE RISKS

Stack loads safely and where they are to be stored for long periods monitor the stack for safety regularly



Falling from height

A Self employed roofer while working for a sub-contractor on a project fell 3 metres through an unmarked hole and is lucky to still be alive.

Having spent weeks in a coma, suffered blood clots on his brain, a fractured collarbone, a punctured lung and tinnitus due to damaged bones in his ear.

The HSE inspector pointed out that the key point in this particular incident is the risk assessment.

It was about planning and making sure that appropriate controls for the work to be undertaken were in place, and making sure that these controls were implemented.

It was stressed that there should have been some form of protection underneath the hole that could not be easily removed,

in order to allow the work to be undertaken safely around the opening. The inspector also pointed out the it was down to chance that this incident did not result in a fatality.

The working at height regulations came into affect in 2005 and Regulations 6 (3) requires that employers undertake suitable and sufficient measures to prevent a person from falling a distance liable to cause injury.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require the employer to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the work that they require their employees to undertake.

In this one incident the injured persons health has possibly been damaged for the rest of his life, no amount of compensation can repair the damage done both physically and mentally.

Before undertaking any work at height



STOP! ask have we covered this work sufficiently and put into place suitable controls that adequately protect the persons undertaking the work?

Do the persons doing the work know the procedures to follow to ensure that the work is done safely?

Have we got adequate supervision?

POINTS OF INTEREST

HSE Shattered Lives Campaign

The HSE's shattered lives campaign was launched in 2008 and targeted five industrial sectors, where slips, trips and falls from height were most prevalent.

This year the campaign is focusing on promoting action in the workplace to address the risks such as those of slips trips and falls in the Construction industry.

In a bid to help businesses take action to better manage risks associated with working at height the HSE has developed a tool called 'Work at Height Access Equipment Information Tool (WAIT) this tool became available in March and is free to use via the HSE web site.

WAIT has been designed to help small businesses choose the most appropriate access equipment where they need to work at height.

MEP's Vote to Scrap Opt-out

Britain has moved a step closer to being forced to limit the working week to 48hrs for ALL employees. MEP's recently voted to abolish the opt-out that allows EU members not to apply the max 48hr week if the employee agrees to work longer.

The UK is determined to keep it and has started talks with EU ministers in an effort to retain the opt-out, the UK does not have a veto on this issue but it is expected to join forces with other countries that back its position.

A decision is expected later in the year following 'conciliation' talks with European council of ministers. If Britain is forced to opt out, the law would come into force in three years time.



Recent cases

A horticultural company has been fined £80,000 after a worker was crushed to death by a bailing machine. The employee died four days after being trapped by the hydraulic arm of the machine at his place of near Doncaster.

Evidence was given that a gate that led to the machinery was incorrectly secured. The HSE inspector prosecuting said the electronic security system on one of the three gates that guarded the machinery was not working properly and that it had been secured on a temporary basis with a hand written warning sign added, it had been left in this condition for four days, with no one attempting to finish the job.

It was not possible to say the employee had entered the area, the company has since upgraded its safety procedures so there could be no repetition of the accident, the company was also ordered to pay £20,000 in costs.

The judge commenting said "As a minimum, the gate should have been secured by a chain and padlock and following that, should have been welded together—a process that took just 30 minutes from start to finish"

"The problem with a handwritten sign is that it is unprofessional, does not demand attention and loses impact very quickly. This was a warning that remained in place not for four minutes, or even four hours, but four days".

Broken ankle cost firm £14,500

The health and safety executive has warned that slips and falls can be costly after the company responsible for a driver breaking his ankle was fined a total of £5,600 and ordered to pay costs of £8,951.

The driver who works for a laundering firm was preparing to fill his truck with diesel at the company's depot. He slipped leaving him stranded for 20 min until he managed to contact his wife using his mobile phone. He required a plate and two pins to be inserted to repair his broken ankle, which was also dislocated. The heard that it was not the first time that drivers had slipped in the area, due to a pump having a minor drip leak when not in use.

Fall from height

A builder suffered severe head injuries after he fell head first through a stairwell opening while working on a construction site, the company was fined £4000 plus £2970 costs in February at Pontefract magistrates court. It pleaded guilty to breaches of reg6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and reg.3(1) of RIDDOR for failing to report the accident immediately.

The injured person fell 2.7 meters and received severe head injuries resulting in him being in hospital for four months. As a result it is unlikely that he will ever be able to return to work.

News

Ministers plan to back 'FIT NOTE' plans

Ministers have agreed to pilot employee 'fit notes' with the idea being for GP's to spell out the tasks workers CAN perform. Trials replacing paper notes with electronic fit notes are underway and if successful could be in place across the UK by 2010

HSE Speaks out

Judith Hackitt has emphasised the important role of safety representatives in achieving successful management of workplace health and safety.

The chair of the health and safety executive was addressing safety representatives attending the 'Health and safety Worker Involvement' conference held by the Trade Union Congress (TUC).

She outlined the HSE's views of worker involvement, and how the Executive intended to build on the success of the Health and Safety at Work Act, etc 1974 to continue to improve workplace health and safety in the 21st Century.

The importance of safety representatives was emphasised by Judith in her comment that 'she was surprised that we continue to have to promote the benefits of worker involvement in health and safety given that in her experience she found it hard to imagine how one could ever put in place an effective workplace health and safety system that did not include real participation and engagement of the workforce'.

Health and safety does not stop anyone from doing their job—it actually helps them to do it more safely and efficiently

The HSE has published a revised Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) on working in confined spaces, offering guidance on the Confined Spaces Regulations and other regulatory duties for work in confined spaces.