



**EASTWOOD
& PARTNERS**
INSURANCE BROKERS

Health & Safety Bulletin

Volume 4 Issue 9

September 2010

BE GAS SAFE

Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer and always check the engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card. Anyone employed to work on gas appliances in domestic premises must be Gas Safe registered and competent in that area of gas work

HSE WEB SITE

HSE welcomes people of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds to its web site. If you are looking for information, help or guidance a number of publications have been translated into languages other than English

Eastwood and Partners Limited Insurance Brokers

What is the HSE?



The HSE is an independent regulator. The run campaigns tackling issues which often result in death, serious injury and illness.

These campaigns deal with real dangers, like asbestos, which kills approximately 4000 people a year, and agriculture, which is one of the most dangerous industries in the UK.

It is as an independent regulator that the HSE bring before the courts those who put others in danger. They are also there to

provide support to businesses in helping them to understand and manage their legal duties.

Working with their co-regulators in local authorities they inspect, investigate and where necessary take enforcement action.

If consulted when problems arise they can be a great source of support.

The strategy for the HSE was written following a consultation programme with employers, employees and their representative groups from across the country.

The HSE recognizes there is still much to be done 180 people died as a result of their work last year and around 1.2 million people are made ill or are injured at work each year.

To reduce these numbers,

save lives and stop people being seriously hurt the HSE are working with all who can contribute towards this goal.

Visit the HSE web site at www.hse.gov.uk and see what information is available, how you can get help and contribute towards the reduction of injuries and ill health in the workplace.

Judith Hackett Chair HSE



Dangers of wood dust

Wood dust is considered to be explosive if ignition of part of a cloud of wood dust results in the propagation of flame through the rest of the cloud. The vigour of flame propagation will vary from dust to dust and not all flammable dusts are equally explosive



Wood dust can cause fire and explosion. The minimum explosible concentration for "wood flour" is 60g/m³ and a dust cloud at this concentration would resemble a very dense fog.



Fires in woodworking extraction systems (Photographs courtesy of West Yorkshire Fire Service)

Fine cutting (e.g. sanding) which produces a dust of very fine particle size.

This is usually assumed to be explosive;

Machining and sawing softwoods which produces chips, shavings and coarse dust with only a small amount of fine dust.

This does not normally create an explosion risk, so long as the fine dust is not allowed to separate and accumulate within confined spaces;

Sawing and machining hardwoods which often produces woodwaste containing considerably more dust than that from softwood. Assume this is **explosible**.

Failure to regularly maintain your dust extraction system could result in serious losses.

HSE NOTICES

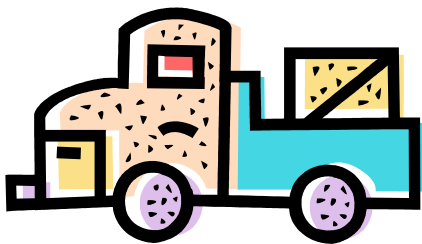
New transport draft document

The department of transport have set out new proposals that would give the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) more flexibility in tackling vehicles that it suspects of being overloaded on the public road, or of breaking operating or driving-hours rules.

The proposed new powers would also help VOSA inspectors to check if hauliers from outside the UK are complying with rules governing the amount of UK domestic work they undertake.

The consultation document is at:

www.dft.gov.uk/consultation/open



Recent cases

Two brothers have been fined a total of £13,000 after a worker was left with a crushed skull and permanent brain damage when he fell through an industrial roof in Carlisle.

The employee was helping to demolish an industrial building in Carlisle when he fell six metres to the concrete floor below. The 28-year-old's sight, hearing and personality have been permanently affected.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted the two brothers following the incident in Carlisle. Carlisle Crown Court heard that one brother was in overall control of the project, and that the other brother, was in charge of dismantling the building the injured employee was working on. In the fall, he suffered 16 skull fractures, broke his jaw in three places, fractured his wrist, damaged a kidney and is now deaf in his right ear and blind in his left eye. Parts of his brain were so badly damaged that they had to be removed. He has been unable to return to work since the incident, and had to wait six months for a titanium plate to be inserted into his damaged skull. He said: "It was a frightening time. There was nothing to protect my brain - just skin. I was worried to go out. I didn't like to be around lots of people in case I bumped my head."

The brother were found guilty of a health and safety offence following a trial at Carlisle Crown Court

Steeplejack seriously injured in fall

A steeplejack company was recently fined £6,600 plus costs after one of its workers fell more than six metres and suffered severe injuries to his back and pelvis as well as serious internal injuries.

The worker was employed to bird debris and to clean the bell chamber at a church.

Two workers gained access to the tower and used scaffold planks to stand on to carry out the work, the planks had been laid on rotten floor boards which gave way when one of the workers stepped onto the board.

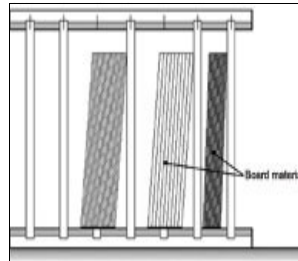
The company were found not to have adequately assessed the risks or select the correct equipment for the work to be done, and had breached regulations 4(1)(a) and 4(1)(c) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

HSE Safety Alert

Fatality caused by collapse of stacked boards

In a recent incident a worker was killed whilst he was helping to remove a board from a stack leaning against a wall. He lost control of the weight of the boards and they fell on him causing serious head injuries. In an earlier almost identical incident at another site a worker had his legs crushed.

Although often large and awkward to handle the retrieval and movement of boards from storage is considered by many users to be a relatively low risk activity. However, boards are heavy and it is easy to lose control of them when they are being moved.



Wooden boards placed in a purpose designed storage rack

News

BP Disaster may tighten current off shore safety laws

Moves by the European commission could force oil and gas companies to abide by a new set of safety laws.

This has been caused by the BP deepwater disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

The EU energy commissioner refused to move on his conviction that there should be a total freeze on new permits for oil exploration drilling until the causes of the BP disaster are known, and that corrective measures have been put into place

Maintenance Awareness

The HSE has in June launched the UK campaign co-ordinated by the European Agency for Safety and Health.

Maintenance work is often looked upon as a disruption of business. It is however a fundamental aspect of good business management, ensuring the safety of the systems used. There is a new Safe-maintenance section on the HSE web site offering pointers and free downloads SEE www.hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance

MYTH OF THE MONTH

Health and safety bans bunting



There are no regulations banning people from hanging bunting at weddings and village fetes or flying flags for sporting events.

HSE encourages people to have a bit of common sense about their attitudes to risk, not to make everything risk-free.

There won't be an army of inspectors cutting down bunting or insisting flags are lowered.

HSE exists to prevent people being killed or seriously injured at work, not to stop people celebrating in style.

75K Penalty for Crush Death

A farming and haulage firm has been fined £21,000 and costs of £54,000.

The employee in his 20s was dumping manure from a trailer at a farm when the drawbar broke, crashing through the back of the vehicle and crushing him to death.

Upon investigation the HSE discovered that the tipper had not been suitably maintained and was also not appropriate for the work being undertaken.

The employer admitted to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and failing to ensure the safety of its employees.

