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Articles:

- Industry Accidents
- NHS Health Check
- Asbestos Prosecutions
- Shorting Wires
- Unauthorised Access
- Safety Charter

Introduction

Welcome to the July 2011 edition of Safety Matters.

Through this newsletter our aim is to inform you of health and safety issues that may have an impact on the Lift & Escalator industry. Safety Matters is also available for download from the LEIA member's website. www.leia.co.uk

Industry Accidents 2010

There were a total of 106 accidents reported to LEIA by 103 companies for 2010. 96 resulted in an absence of more than 3 days from work, 8 were of more major injuries including fractures, and regrettably 2 accidents resulted in the death of employees of lift companies.

Our sympathies are with the families and colleagues of the deceased.

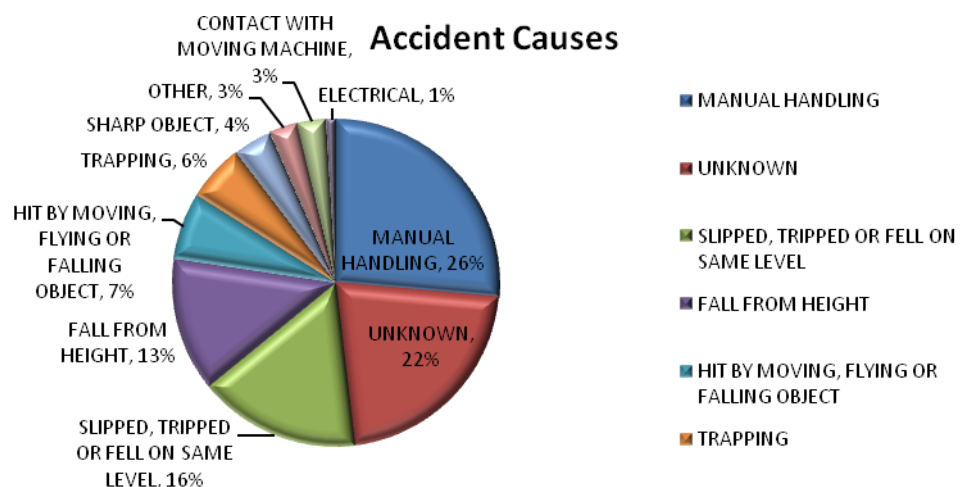
The three causes resulting in the highest number of injuries are Manual Handling (28 incidents), Slips, Trips or Falls on the same level (17 incidents and Falls From Height (14 incidents).

Although Falls from Height was the third highest cause of injury, it accounted for 40% of all the major injuries. This acts as a reminder to follow your company procedure for all Work at Height.

The LEIA Safety Charter (see below) is intended to reinforce the essential control measures that should be used to address our particularly high risk areas which we know have caused serious and fatal accidents in the past

The HSE have planned and current campaigns and tools to highlight the risks to staff. The "Shattered Lives" Campaign against Slips, Trips and Falls is planned to be extended to cover Falls from Height.

The causes of accidents reported to LEIA for 2010 are given in the table below:



NHS health check



Almost everyone can be at risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes or kidney disease, but these conditions can be prevented if problems are identified early enough.

In order to improve everyone's health and to make us more aware of the effects of our own lifestyle on our health, the NHS have introduced a free health check for everyone over 40.

The NHS are introducing this check in stages over the country so do not worry if you have not heard about it yet. Speak with your GP or pharmacist for advice on when it will be available.

The health check is done at your GP or can be done at a local pharmacy. It involves recording your family medical history, your height, weight, age and ethnicity. Your blood pressure will be recorded and a finger prick blood test for cholesterol. The results are

available immediately and you will be given personalised advice on how to lower your risk of illness. The information is completely confidential.

Asbestos

Asbestos fibres are generally present in the environment in the UK so people are exposed to very low levels of fibres. However a key factor in the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease is the total number of fibres breathed in. Working on or near damaged asbestos containing materials (ACM) or breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres, which may be many hundreds of times that of environmental levels could increase your chances of getting an asbestos related disease.

When these fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4,000 deaths per year. There are four main diseases caused by asbestos: Mesothelioma (which is always fatal), Lung Cancer (almost always fatal), Asbestosis (not always fatal, but it can be very debilitating) and Diffuse Pleural Thickening (not fatal).

Remember, these diseases will not affect you immediately but later on in life, so there is a need to protect yourself now to prevent you contracting an asbestos related disease in the future. It is also important to remember that people who smoke and are also exposed to asbestos fibres are at a much greater risk of developing lung cancer. If you are at work on a lift in a customer's building, particularly one built before 2000, it is possible that there will be asbestos containing materials present. If these materials are damaged or disturbed by your work you may be exposed to hazardous asbestos fibres.

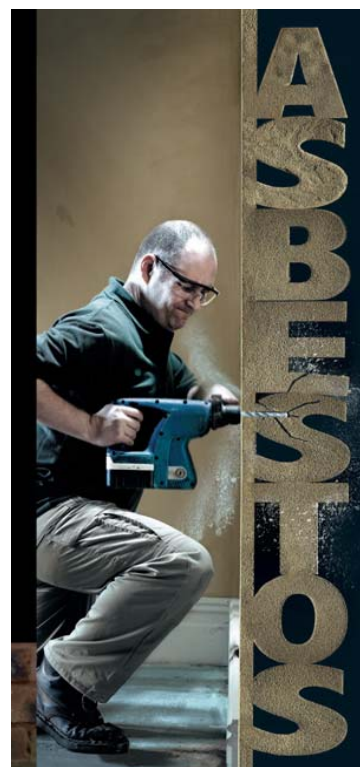
If you encounter anything you suspect to be asbestos then stop work and seek advice immediately from your company.

The following case shows how seriously the HSE view exposure to asbestos. **In this case the site manager – an individual – was prosecuted rather than his employer.**

Site manager prosecuted after worker is exposed to asbestos

A construction site manager has been prosecuted after directing a bricklayer to carry out work during a refurbishment project which resulted in clouds of asbestos containing dust being created. This was despite the fact that an asbestos survey had been carried out on the premises and that therefore the presence of the asbestos was known. The work was only halted when another manager who realised the danger told the bricklayer to stop. The site manager pleaded guilty to breaching Section 7 (a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was given two months suspended sentence and was ordered to carry out 150 hours Community Service.

Section 7 of the Act covers employee's duties rather than the duties of employers.



(Picture: HSE)

Shorting wires

The use of shorting wires to bypass parts of circuits, particularly stop circuits, needs to be controlled and most companies now have very strict procedures in place to cover this, with many specifying long wires of distinct colours to avoid the danger created by shorting wires being inadvertently forgotten and left in place.

For this reason, the use of "homemade" shorting wires, made up on site, in an uncontrolled way is outlawed by many companies. You should always follow the procedure laid down by your employer and in cases of doubt refer to your supervisor. The picture (right) shows a temporary shorting wire which was inadvertently left in place.



Unauthorised access



How many times have you gone to a lift maintenance call out or a service and found evidence of tampering with the lift by members of the public? One member reported finding a motorcycle crash helmet in the lift pit – there is no way that got there without the doors being opened. Triangular door keys are readily available and there are videos on You Tube showing how to gain access to a lift shaft or car top.

Anti vandal fittings are produced that can reduce the instances of unauthorised access and lift owners can do something about this, but they need to be made aware. If you find any evidence of unauthorised access you should report it to your line manager so that the lift owner can be formally notified (and your company can record that they have told them).

Safety Charter

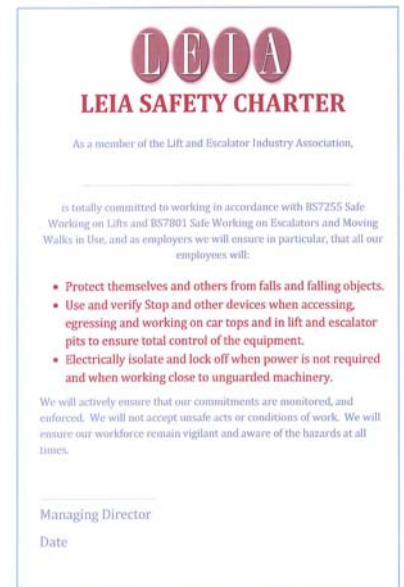
LEIA have introduced a Safety Charter that tries to highlight the most hazardous areas of working within the lift and escalator industry. The Safety Charter is intended to be signed by everyone in the industry. Managers and directors will have the opportunity to declare their commitment to ensuring that employees are kept safe; employees will have a similar declaration of a commitment to working safely, contained in the new version of the LEIA Site Handbook.

The three elements of the Safety Charter call on managers to ensure employees will

- Protect themselves and others from falls and falling objects
- Use and verify stop and other devices when accessing, egressing and working on car tops and in lift and escalator pits to ensure total control of the equipment.
- Electrically isolate and lock off when power is not required and when working close to unguarded machinery.

We ask that management and field employees commit themselves to managing and working safely. To this end, member companies are asked to convey these working procedures to employees and /or adopt them into their working procedures.

We recommend that the Safety Charter or Site Handbook is signed to demonstrate total commitment and conviction to safe working at all times.



LEIA
LEIA SAFETY CHARTER

As a member of the Lift and Escalator Industry Association,

is totally committed to working in accordance with BS7255 Safe Working on Lifts and BS7801 Safe Working on Escalators and Moving Walks in Use, and as employers we will ensure in particular, that all our employees will:

- Protect themselves and others from falls and falling objects.
- Use and verify Stop and other devices when accessing, egressing and working on car tops and in lift and escalator pits to ensure total control of the equipment.
- Electrically isolate and lock off when power is not required and when working close to unguarded machinery.

We will actively ensure that our commitments are monitored, and enforced. We will not accept unsafe acts or conditions of work. We will ensure our workforce remain vigilant and aware of the hazards at all times.

Managing Director
Date

LEIA

July 2011