SAFETY UPDATE

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THIS ISSUE

NEWS

ISO 45001 GOES LIVE REDUCE YOUR MANUAL HANDLING TRAINING

HSE RECONSIDER HOW TO INFLUENCE SMALLER FIRMS

PASSER BY DIED AFTER BEING STRUCK BY BRICKS

CASES

HAVS SURVEILENCE

PEDERSTRIAN/VEHICLE MANAGAEMNT

UNSAFE SCAFFOLD

LIFTING OPERATIONS

UNSAFE PLANT OPERATION – OPERATIVE FINED

NEWS

ISO SAFETY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK GOES LIVE

Leadership, workforce engagement and risk assessment are key

The new International Standard for occupational health and safety (OH&S) management systems has been published (12th March 2018) – *ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements with guidance for use.*

ISO 45001 will replace OHSAS 18001 and organisations already certified to OHSAS 18001 have three years to comply with the new ISO 45001 standard. Certification of conformity to ISO 45001 is **not** a requirement of the standard.

The standard provides a set of processes for improving supply chain health and safety and is designed to help organizations of all sizes and industries reduce workplace injuries and illnesses.

The new standard uses the familiar Plan-Do-Check-Act model, recommended by HSE, within which organisations can minimise the risk of harm. The measures in place should address those hazards which can lead to long-term health issues as well as the hazards which give rise to traumatic injury.

Active leaders and involved workforce in 'context'

Everyone in an organisation must feel a shared responsibility for maintaining a safe environment, including employees, executives and directors.

Company-wide engagement is central to ISO 45001. The new standard recognizes the value of worker consultation and places greater emphasis on employees being actively involved in the development, planning, implementation and continual improvement of the management system.

The Lift and Escalator Industry Association
33-34 Devonshire Street
London
W1G 6PY
P: 020 7935 3013

Senior management must take an active role, promote a positive culture and communicate what needs to be done and why it is important. Leaders need to demonstrate they are actively involved and taking steps to integrate the H&S management system into the overall business processes.

DON'T WASTE MONEY ON MANUAL HANDLING TRAINING

HSE call for focus on elimination or reduction of manual handling risk

HSE has reported that research has shown that general training in lifting techniques is an ineffective way of controlling the risks of manual handling in businesses.

By contrast the regulator recommends that getting help to change the way you work can reduce manual handling risks and thereby avoid "paying for ineffective or unnecessary training."

Launching web-based advice at its inaugural MSD Summit the HSE Health and Work Portfolio Manager Geoff Cox said:

"Our research shows that simplistic training involving bending your knees to lift a cardboard box is just a waste of time and money, it just doesn't make any difference. The overall aim is to avoid and reduce manual handling, and that's where employers should start if their workforce faces manual handling risks. Don't start with training, start with re-organising and redesigning your working practices."

Image shows lightweight kerbs made from recycled plastic (Courtesy of DURAKERB)

HSE RECONSIDER HOW TO INFLUENCE SMALLER FIRMS

Regulator advice and messages are failing to chime with the SME businesses

HSE has found that the majority of fatal incidents involve small businesses and nearly half of all reported injuries occur during 'refurbishment' activities.

Risks on larger projects can be substantial but HSE find that large projects are, generally, "better at controlling risks than most small projects".

The HSE Construction Sector Plan determined that improvement for small/micro businesses is a key priority for the regulator and that research would be used to develop the right mix of messages, tools, information and incentives to help smaller construction businesses to comply proportionately with sensible risk management.

Way forward

On 14th March 2018 the HSE Board considered a report on research which concludes that areas to be explored further by HSE are:

Tone and content – changing the tone and content for information and publicity for some audiences. Enforcement publicity is essential to highlight consequences and to deter 'Cowboys', however HSE may need to consider how a more "supportive tone" might be delivered to those who would best respond to it and who should deliver the information;

Trusted messengers – use of peer networks to influence messaging and reaching out to people using the channels/mechanisms they use whilst acknowledging that few will come to the regulator and identifying who are the "trusted messengers";

Simple practical guidance – understanding how HSE can satisfy the need for simple and practical guidance for clients and contractors. HSE remain committed to a goal-based system of regulation but for smaller businesses the regulator will now consider what it can do to illustrate good practice; and

Client awareness – increasing awareness of client responsibilities in construction and providing information/tools to allow them to make a more informed purchase.

PASSER-BY DIED AFTER BENG STRUCK BY BRICKS

Pack of bricks fell from crane onto member of public

The BBC and other sources have reported that a woman has died after being hit by bricks which fell from a tower crane in the Mile End area of London on 27th March 2018 at around 09.30.

The Metropolitan Police told the BBC that the 28-year-old woman was taken to a major trauma centre in east London, according to the London Ambulance Service (LAS) and died 2 days later in hospital.

The Police and HSE are investigating the incident.

CASES

FIRM FAILING ON HAVS SURVEILLANCE FINED £50,000

Door manufacturer failed to manage sanding and buffing tool vibration

A leading manufacturer and supplier of industrial doors and architectural products has been fined after a workman developed Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).

Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates heard how the employee was exposed to vibration from the use of handheld pneumatic buffing and sanding tools over a period of 15 years causing him to develop HAVS.

HSE investigators found the company failed to implement a safe system of work in order to control the risk of exposure to vibration.

Understand why health surveillance is necessary

The court also heard that employees were exposed to vibration levels that had not been reduced to as low as was reasonably practicable thereby increasing their risk of developing HAVS. It was found that company did not have a suitable health surveillance system in place to identify HAVS symptoms at an early stage.

The company from Merthyr Tydfil, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and has been fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,881.70.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Lee Jones said,

"This was a case of the company completely failing to understand the importance of assessing the risk to their employees from exposure to vibration and therefore putting in place the correct control measures.

If they had understood why health surveillance was necessary, it would have ensured that it had the right systems in place to monitor worker's health and the employee's condition would have not have been allowed to develop to a severe and life altering stage."

FIRM FINED £1MILLION OVER TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Workman fatally injured when crushed by fork lift truck

A plastic product manufacturer has been fined £1m after a delivery driver was fatally injured. Cambridge Crown Court heard how a delivery driver was fatally injured when he was struck by a fork lift truck carrying large coils suspended from the forks.

HSE found that the host company failed to properly manage workplace transport in the yard area where employees and members of the public were exposed to the risk of being hit.

Not organised to allow safe circulation

The investigation also found that the systems of work in place were not, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe.

The defendant company of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and have been fined £1m and ordered to pay costs of £27,942.57

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Roxanne Barker said:

"There are more than 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace every year, and, like in this case, sadly some of which are fatal.

The HSE investigation found the yard was not organised to allow safe circulation of people and traffic as appropriate routes were not identified and therefore insufficient in number.

A properly implemented Traffic Management Plan should have identified sufficient measures for the separation of vehicles and people including protected walkways, clear signage and barriers."

SCAFFOLDING FIRM PROVIDED UNSAFE LOADING BAY

Young apprentice fell between upper guardrail and platform

A scaffolding contractor has been sentenced for safety breaches after a 16-year-old apprentice joiner fell some 4m from an unsafe scaffold platform in September 2016.

Sheffield Magistrates' Court heard how the apprentice was passing roof tiles from the loading bay to a colleague on the scaffold when he caught his foot in a gap between the scaffold platform and the loading bay.

The apprentice fell backwards under a single guard rail to the ground below, sustaining injuries including a fractured cheekbone, broken wrist and injuries to his ribs. The apprentice also required 13 stitches for a deep cut above his left eye.

Well known industry guidance

HSE investigators found the loading bay edge protection did not include an intermediate guard-rail or toe board.

The scaffolding firm of from Elsecar pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 8(a) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and has been fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £918 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Trisha Elvy commented:

"This case highlights the importance of following well-known industry guidance to design and erect scaffolding in a safe manner, a fall from this height could have easily been fatal."

BUILDERS EXPOSED PUBLIC TO EXCAVATION RISK

Dangerous excavation and poorly planned lifting fined

A construction firm has been fined £20,000 after failing to safeguard the public and workers from an unsafe excavation, lifting operations and inadequate welfare facilities for workers on site in June 2016.

Greater Manchester Magistrates heard how the contractor was undertaking the refurbishment of a domestic property in Salford. HSE visited the project and the inspector issued two prohibition notices regarding the unsupported deep excavation in the front garden.

There were insufficient controls to prevent members of the public accessing the hazard. The inspector also found that a steel beam was being lifted unsafely.

Action against those below "required standards"

The company failed to properly plan the lifting operations or carry it out safely and pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company also pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 15(11) and Regulation 2 of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £20,000 with £5,176.90 costs.

HSE inspector David Argument said after the hearing:

"These risks could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices. Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards".

VIDEO EVIDENCE CONVICTS EXCAVATOR DRIVER

Pedestrian crushed against wall by speeding excavator

An employee of a waste skip company has been sentenced after causing serious injury to a fellow worker in August 2017.

Southwark Crown Court was shown CCTV footage of the incident which showed the operator driving into another excavator at the site in Wimbledon, South West London. He then proceeded to reverse the excavator at speed, resulting in a pedestrian being crushed against a shed wall and sustaining serious injuries.

The prosecution alleged that the operator had not taken reasonable care for himself and others whilst operating the excavator. He pleaded not guilty to two charges of breaching Section 7(a) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. A jury found him guilty of both counts after a five-day trial and he was sentenced to six months in custody suspended for two years and ordered to undertake 40 hours of unpaid work.

Employees must take care

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Sarah Pearce said:

"Employees should take care of themselves and others whilst at work. 23% of those fatally injured at work in the waste industry were struck by a moving vehicle.

This incident could so easily have had more severe consequences for all involved. Employees should be aware of the dangers and potential consequences of operating plant in an unsafe manner."