



SAFETY UPDATE

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NEWS

UNLOCKING KEYS FOR LIFTS & LIFTING PLATFORMS

The HSE recently re-issued their safety alert warning of the dangers of mishandling of release keys:

[Link to HSE bulletin](#)

There have been several serious accidents, and at least one fatality, related to unauthorised use of unlocking keys for lifts and lifting platforms by untrained persons.

Mis-use of these keys is extremely dangerous. Owners must ensure that unlocking keys are kept securely, and that staff are instructed not to use them unless trained and authorised to do so.

A care home was recently fined after an employee suffered significant injuries when a door safety locking mechanism had been overridden with a screwdriver. In another incident a shop assistant used an unlocking key to open the ground floor landing door of a lifting platform which then descended toward the people in the lift-well. The fatality in South Wales resulted in a significant prosecution, as reported in the national press.

Further information for lift and lifting platform owners is contained on the following Health and Safety.

[Link to safety-alert](#)

NEW MEWP WORK AT HEIGHT RESCUE GUIDANCE

Industry body publishes simple guidance on MEWP stranding actions

The Strategic Forum Plant Safety Group (SFPSG) has published Rescue of Persons from MEWP, a 10-page publication which provides guidance on plans to rescue powered access users if they become stranded at height.

The new guidance document has been compiled by the SFPSG MEWPs Group which is chaired by the Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) and administered and supported by the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF).

The Lift and Escalator Industry Association
33-34 Devonshire Street
London
W1G 6PY

Essential rescue planning

The new publication can be freely download from the CPA website. Kevin Minton, Chief Executive of the CPA, said:



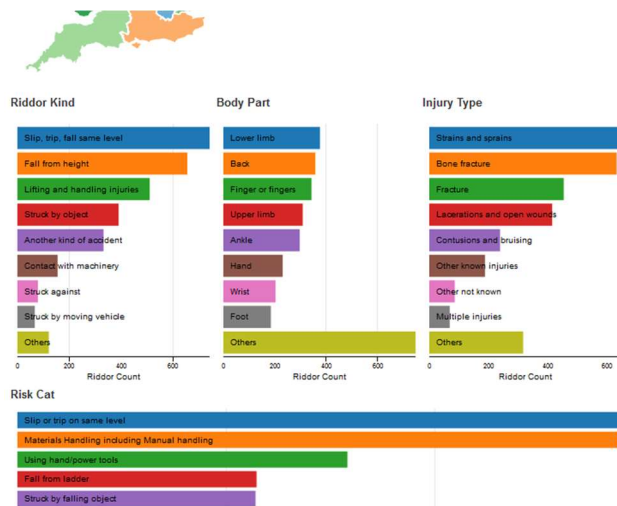
"We anticipate that the guidance will be a useful reference tool for MEWP hire companies, customers, operators and manufacturers. When MEWPs are used there is always an inherent risk of people becoming stranded at height due to a machine malfunctioning, breaking down or other influences.

Although measures can be put into place to reduce the risk such as regular maintenance of equipment and the use of competent, medically fit operators, it is still important that organisations have plans in place should a rescue from a MEWP ever become necessary.

HSE PUBLISH RIDDOR DATA VISUALISATION TOOL

Construction injury records made more relevant and easily used

HSE has made [available online](#) sample data of 3050 construction sector RIDDOR records from 2011 to 2017 explaining that:



"This dashboard is a data visualisation of RIDDOR records related to construction, designed to make the data more relevant and easily used by interested parties.

This data is licensed under the Open Government License and you can download the dashboard data file. For information on data selection and the data dictionary for the data file see Dashboard Data Dictionary.

Users can click on any chart element to filter, click reset to remove filters. You can also navigate through elements using tab and select using enter"

HEALTH AND SAFETY STATISTICS 2018

The HSE have published online today (31 October) the latest statistics on work-related health and safety in Great Britain, including the following key annual figures (2017/18):

- **1.4** million working people suffering from work-related ill health
- **2,595** mesothelioma deaths due to past asbestos exposures (2016)
- **144** workers killed at work

- **555,000** injuries occurred at work according to the Labour Force Survey
- **71,062** injuries to employees reported under RIDDOR
- **30.7** million working days lost due to work-related ill health and workplace injury
- **£15.0** billion estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions (2016/17)

The release provides detailed commentary on these figures and is supported by:

- The Statistics webpages: (http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/index.htm?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=) with a range of information e.g. on different types of work-related ill-health and different industry sectors.
- A comprehensive set of tables, designed to make the data accessible to users.
- Our annual infographic-style summary booklet.

CASES

DEATH FAILED TO TRIGGER PREVENTIVE ACTION

Prison term for director whilst his company ordered to pay £3/4m

A waste and recycling company has been fined £700,000 and a director jailed after the death of a workman in 2010. The machine involved in the death continued to operate in a dangerous manner for up to five years after the death.

Liverpool Crown Court heard how the company was operated a baling machine with a safety interlock system defeated. The operator entered the baling chamber to clear a blockage and the machine automatically activated. He suffered haemorrhaging, shock and severe traumatic injury to both legs and died whilst being taken hospital.

HSE and Police investigators found that the safety interlock had been defeated two months earlier. Poor maintenance of the machine required frequent operator intervention.

Failure to act was serious 'aggravating factor'

HSE inspectors visited in July 2015 having been informed that the machine was being used with further critical safety systems on the baler being defeated.

It was found that the machine could be operated with guarding open putting the operator at serious risk of injury. This was noted as a serious aggravating factor by the Judge upon sentencing. The company was fined £700,000 and the director was sentenced to eight months in prison.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Phil Redman said:



"This incident was completely avoidable and it is inconceivable that the defendant continued to operate the same dangerous machine in the way it did for as long as five years after this incident.

Companies should be aware that HSE will not accept the defeating of safety systems in order to maintain production and will not hesitate to take action against those that fall below the required standards."

FIRM FINED OVER FAILURE TO ASSESS VIBRATION RISK

Vibration regulations not acted upon until seven years in operation

An avionics business has been fined £80k for failing to assess the risk to workers from hand arm vibration.

Cardiff Crown Court heard how people working at the company were exposed to vibration from use of a wet blasting cabinet and vibrating hand tools.

It was not until late in 2013 that action was taken by the company to assess and reduce vibration risk, despite the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations having been in force since July 2005 and were preceded by similar risk assessment requirements.

Workers must be informed and consulted

HSE investigators found that the company failed in their duty to recognise and properly assess the risk from hand arm vibration at their facility in Talbot Green, South Wales.

The company from Harmondsworth was fined £80,000. Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Helen Turner said,



"This was a case of the company failing to identify the risk from hand arm vibration, which is a recognised health risk with potentially disabling consequences.

Unless vibration is identified and properly assessed, an employer won't know the level of risk, and whether action is needed to protect workers.

FAILURE TO ISOLATE LEAVES WORKMAN PARALYSED

Conveyor guards removed before power source isolated

A building products company has been fined £200k after the arm of a workman was amputated and he was left paralysed from the chest down after being drawn into machinery in July 2017.

Burnley Magistrates heard how the charge-hand was working with a group of colleagues to remove a blockage and spillage on a conveyor when he was drawn into the conveyor system.

Guards had been removed from the machine but the power had not been isolated.

Clear isolation procedures required

HSE investigators found that the company failed to properly ensure that machines were always isolated from power, to be made safe, before guarding was removed from machinery.

The firm pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc act 1974. Total fines of £200,000 were imposed with costs of over £7k.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Steven Boyd said:



"This case shows the devastating consequences of coming into contact with dangerous machinery.

It is crucial that companies have a clear procedure for isolating machinery and they have appropriate supervision and monitoring to ensure it is adhered to."

YOUNG WORKER LOSES FINGERS IN SAWING INCIDENT

Provision of training and information could not be proved

A sole trader builder from Cornwall has been sentenced after one of his employees sustained serious, life-changing hand injuries whilst operating a handheld circular saw in February 2017.

Bodmin Magistrates heard how the company was undertaking a barn refurbishment when the 17-year-old workman was injured whilst using the saw to cut wooden flooring sheets.

The blade came into contact with his hand and cut fully through his index finger, three quarters through his middle finger and half way through his ring finger.

No record of training plus unsafe working practices

HSE investigators found no record of any information, instruction and training provided to the employee in the safe use of the circular saw. Safe working practices were not followed when cutting the flooring sheet.

The saw blade had not been properly adjusted for the size of material being cut at the time of the incident and the flooring sheet was not appropriately supported during the operation.

The company was fined £1,120 and ordered to pay costs of £8489.48.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Dr Jo-Anne Michael said:



"This injury was easily preventable and the risk associated with the task should have been identified.

Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from contact with dangerous parts of machinery to ensure that the risks are given careful attention to ensure they are properly controlled."

BUILDING OWNER FAILED TO CHECK FOR ASBESTOS

Prison sentence for businessman after previous HSE enforcement

A Manchester-based businessman has been prosecuted after failing to check whether asbestos was present in a building he owned before starting major refurbishment works.

Manchester Magistrates heard how he failed to survey his property in Manchester for asbestos before carrying out renovations to the building between 1 April 2012 and 12 October 2017.

Following an HSE routine inspection an asbestos survey was carried out which revealed large amounts of asbestos (some in very poor condition) indicating that asbestos could have previously been removed, from areas of the building already renovated, without any controls in place

Well aware of asbestos duties

HSE investigators found that the defendant failed to identify the risks involved, and put appropriate measures in place to prevent exposure to asbestos. He had been subject to "previous HSE enforcement action" over a similar issue and was well aware of his duties under the law.

The defendant was given a six months prison sentence, suspended for two years, sentenced to 250 community service hours and ordered to pay costs of £5,742.14.

HSE inspector Matt Greenly said after the case:



"This case highlights the importance of surveying a property for asbestos to prevent risk to anyone occupying or working in that building and to reduce the risk of exposure to asbestos and contracting incurable diseases as a result of that exposure."

POOR PLANT ISOLATION CAUSED CONVEYOR DANGER

Arm of fitter trapped between conveyor drum and belt

A quarry operator has been fined £30k after the arm of a workman was caught in a conveyor belt in November 2016.

Lochmaddy Sherriff Court heard that maintenance work was being undertaken on the conveyor belt of a screener unit. The belt was "slipping" and when the injured workman leaned through the opening in the conveyor frame his hand was pulled into the nip point between the drive drum and conveyor belt.

His arm quickly became entangled in the mechanism, causing severe injury, permanent disfigurement and impairment.

Guarding and systems of work were deficient

HSE investigators found the guarding of the screener unit was not adequate. In addition, the company failed to have in place a suitable procedure for the isolation of the screener unit and to ensure the unit was maintained in good repair as other guard panels were not in place.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(1) of the Quarries Regulations 1999 and has been fined £30,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector, Mike Tetley said:



"This injury was easily preventable and the risks from this type of equipment are well-known.

Companies operating belt conveyors must ensure access has been prevented to dangerous parts and that guards are properly maintained. Having a secure isolation procedure in place is also an essential control when undertaking maintenance work.

BUILDER ERROR CAUSED FALL OF RESIDENT

Director prosecuted over refurb project danger to others

A construction company and its director have been sentenced after a resident fell through the balcony at his home during refurbishment work in August 2016.

Truro Magistrates heard how the resident was sitting on the balcony at his property when he fell more than 3m through a plastic panel, which had been installed within his balcony to the beach below. He suffered multiple fractures and damage to his liver.

The defendant had been working on refurbishment of the neighbouring property. Sheets of plywood and plastic were used to temporarily infill the completed balcony framework prior to the toughened safety glass infills being fitted.

Assessment and fall prevention measures lacking

HSE investigators found that in the absence of safety glazing, the fall prevention measures were inadequate and there were no measures in place to prevent access to the balcony until the construction work had been completed.

The defendant company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £22,000 with costs of £4,782.72. The director was given a 12-week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to pay costs of £4782.72.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Georgina Speake said:



"This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities/injuries in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known."

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN GUARDS PROVES COSTLY

Woodworking machinery defective despite previous HSE advice

A timber products company has been fined following repeated failures to safely guard and maintain woodwork equipment used by their employees.

Barkingside Magistrates heard how employees had been exposed to the risk of serious injury because a radial arm drilling machine was not fitted with an effective telescopic guard or trip device.

In addition, the housing on a re-saw blade and self-return function on a cross-cut saw had not been maintained.

Continual fail to address risks

The failures found were despite the company having received previous enforcement action from HSE on similar issues.

The company pleaded guilty to two breaches of Regulation 5(1) and one of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and have been fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of over £2k.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Dominic Elliss said



"In this case, the company completely failed to grasp the importance of installing and maintaining basic but essential guards to prevent access to the dangerous parts of woodworking machinery. Companies should be aware that HSE may bring prosecutions where duty holders continually fail to address risks in the workplace.

Woodworking machinery relies on the provision and ongoing maintenance of suitable guards to prevent significant injuries occurring, and businesses should take this opportunity to review their own arrangements and ensure they are sufficiently robust."

PUBLICATIONS

HSE Health and Safety Statistics 2018

The latest statistics on work-related health and safety in Great Britain:

http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/index.htm?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=