



SAFETY UPDATE

Issue 04 April 2020

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NEWS

COVID-19 ADVICE & GUIDANCE FOR CONSTRUCTION

Construction Leadership Council industry guidance etc.

The impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on businesses across the construction industry, many of them SMEs, is proving to be dramatic and unavoidable.

The Construction Leadership Council has published guidance and information on construction-specific issues.

Site Operating Procedures

Details of the financial support available from Government have been collated and [Site Operating Procedures Version 3](#) have been produced to ensure sites are implementing the Government's social distancing requirements and managing the risk from corona virus.

Businesses should continue to follow the most up-to-date [Government guidance](#).



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HSE PLAN AND CONSTRUCTION PRIORITIES 2020/21

Appointed CDM 2015 Principal Designers remain focus of HSE inspections

The HSE Board met on 18th March 2020 to consider the Business Plan 2020/21 which brings together the key HSE actions as the national regulator for health and safety. There are five themes:

HSE consider that construction remains a hazardous industry and whilst performance has improved the level of incidents and ill health remain high.

Construction Sector Priorities

Inspection activities undertaken by HSE in the construction sector will focus on:

- **SME Refurbishment** – projects which involve small and medium sized enterprises carrying out building refurbishment work;
- **CDM 2015 Principal Designers** – embedding the requirements of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 through targeted inspections of duty holders providing principal designer services;
- **Lung Disease** – the prevention and control of occupational lung disease, especially that caused by asbestos and others dusts e.g. respirable crystalline silica (RCS); and
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders** – the prevention and control of MSD e.g. by avoiding manual handling where practicable and managing residual risk with manual handling aids.

In addition, the regulator will undertake a major health-focused initiative involving around 1,000 inspections during October – December 2020 covering a representational range of site types and activities.

Construction

- Construction remains a hazardous industry, and while performance has improved, the level of incidents and ill health remain high. Our inspection activities will focus on:
 - SMEs carrying out refurbishments;
 - embedding the requirements of the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM) through targeted inspections of dutyholders providing principal designer services;



TOWER CRANE OUT OF SERVICE SAFETY ALERT

Important advice from Construction Plant-hire Association and HSE

In view of the unprecedented situation presented by the coronavirus outbreak, the Construction Plant-hire Association's (CPA) Tower Crane Interest Group (TCIG) has issued advice to tower crane owners and users relating to how tower cranes should be left out of service for potentially lengthy periods of time.

The CPA Safety Alert states that failure to take the crane out of service in line with manufacturer instructions and to periodically inspect the crane whilst out of service could result in very high wind loadings being placed on the crane with consequential collapse of the jib or the whole crane.

The new tower crane safety alert can be downloaded from the CPA website at <https://www.cpa.uk.net/news-events/tower-crane-safety-alert-coronavirus/>

HSE advice on Coronavirus “inspection difficulties”

CPA recommends that a thorough examination regime for the crane is maintained whilst it remains out of service. Prior to the crane re-entering service, the crane should be inspected by the crane supplier.

HSE is aware of concerns relating to the examination of equipment that is subject to statutory inspection time limits and has issued a [statement](#) on what should be taken into account where inspection difficulties occur due to the effects of the coronavirus outbreak.

At the current time, HSE is not considering issuing exemptions or relaxation of these requirements, but recognises this is a fluid situation and this position is constantly under review.



CASES

POORLY DESIGNED SCHOOL GATE CRUSHED CHILD

Sliding gate over-run mechanism proved insufficiently robust

A manufacturer of bespoke gates has been prosecuted after an eight-year-old girl was crushed by a steel gate at a London school in May 2018.

Westminster Magistrates heard that the child was leaving an evening gymnastics club at the school when the sliding gate fell on her.

The manual sliding gate, (some 5m long and 1.7 high) was designed, manufactured and installed by the defendant February 2018 after a paper delivery lorry damaged a previous, two-leaf swing gate.

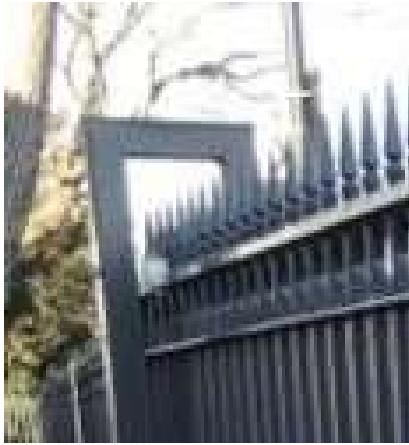
Gate became disengaged from holding rollers

HSE investigators found that the mechanism in place to prevent the sliding gate from overrunning and falling over as it was opened was insufficient if the gate was opened robustly.

When the gate was opened at the time of the incident, it became disengaged from the rollers holding it up, when its momentum caused it to ‘ride over’ the stop.

The defendant company from Sutton, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Section 6(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £19,327.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Sarah Whittle said:



"The failure to fit suitable end-stops meant that the gate was an accident waiting to happen and could have fallen on anyone at any time with life threatening consequences."

POWER GENERATOR PROSECUTED OVER UNSAFE SYSTEM

Maintenance workers seriously injured when energy suddenly released

An electricity power station company has been fined £200,000 after three workmen were injured by a sudden release of water and sludge whilst carrying out maintenance work at a Cheshire power station in January 2018.

Manchester Magistrates heard that the three workers were removing a re-circulation pump for maintenance when some 39 cubic metres of diluted slurry and associated stored energy was released as the pump was removed causing sustained multiple fracture injuries to all three men.

Pipework remained under pressure

HSE investigators found that the pressurised contents of the pump and associated pipework had not been discharged prior to work commencing due to the drain pipe being blocked. This resulted in the release of stored energy during the removal of the pump.

The company failed to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the hazards and risks associated with the work and had not implemented a safe system of work. A fine of £200,000 with costs of £7163.20 was imposed.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Jane Carroll said:



"This incident could so easily have been avoided if the company had identified and managed the risks involved and put a safe system of work in place."

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

FRAGILE ROOF REPLACEMENT PUT WORKERS IN DANGER

Measures to prevent falling from or through the roof were missing

A logistics company has been fined £80,000 after failing to provide fall protection for workers replacing the roof of its Blackburn premises in May 2019.

Blackpool Magistrates heard how HSE inspectors visited the warehouse and observed two workers on the roof without any physical protection or any work equipment in place to prevent or minimise the distance of a fall.

Further investigation revealed that the roof of the warehouse was fragile and people were at risk of falling through the structure.

Working beneath roof using MEWP required

The removal of tiles should have been carried out from underneath the roof using a scissor lift or a cherry picker.

The defendant from Blackburn, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1570.60.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Stuart Hadfield, said:



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

Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standard."