

ARTICLES:-FALL FROM HEIGHT RISKS NOT CONTROLLED

A property developer has been found guilty of a number of safety failings that endangered the lives of workers on a construction site in Hull. The HSE carried out a routine visit and found multiple fall from height risks which were not being controlled. The rear scaffolding was unstable, was not securely tied, unsuitable ladders were being used as a means of access and there was no edge protection present to part of rear of building which was being demolished in exposed parts of the four storey terraced buildings.

Other observations were, insufficient number of boards used to the roof area to prevent workers from falling through gaps between ceiling joists – boards present were also very loose. Debris being thrown from a 15m platform into an area below where other workers were operating, and lack of welfare provisions on site (toilets and washing facilities were poor and not sufficient for number of operatives on site).

The site was issued with a Prohibition Notice the same day (2nd October 2007) and all site work ceased until management systems were implemented and risks assessed and properly controlled. HSE inspector Stephen Hargreaves said "Many people are killed on construction sites every year, and suitable planning and **Risk Management** is vital to prevent unnecessary risks."

Two days after the Prohibition Notice was served the company went into liquidation and was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £10,000 in costs.

CLEANER CRUSHED TO DEATH IN PIN BOWL MACHINE

A retail company has been fined £40,000 after a cleaner was crushed to death inside a ten pin bowling machine. Ferdinand de la Cruz was found by a fellow work colleague. It is thought that he had been cleaning and servicing the machine, which clears the skittles, but had not isolated it. While underneath the raised mechanism, it descended on top of him and pinned him to the floor. He suffered serious crush injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene. Mitchells and Butlers Retail Ltd which ran the Hollywood Bowl site had subsequently invested £2 million to create and install adequate guarding on bowling lanes to all sites.

COMPANY FAILS TO MANAGE LEGIONELLA RISKS

The Managing director of a midlands based company failed to put in place a management system to control legionella, despite receiving warnings from water-treatment contractors. In September 2008 HSE inspectors visited Metal Finishers Ltd in Coseley to look at the firm's legionella controls. The facility was used to treat metal, and this process involved using two water cooling towers. The HSE saw that there were no management controls, failure to carry out regular testing and monitoring for bacteria. A prohibition Notice was served. The HSE inspector said "Legionella can make people seriously ill and in severe cases, can kill. Managing Directors have a responsibility to act upon findings like this as soon as possible. They should not assume that they will not be prosecuted for their individual failings.

CHECK YOUR ARRANGEMENTS FOR:- SAFETY MONITORING SYSTEMS

REVIEW

Safety inspections should be completed by an organisation and is generally taken to mean a schedule of inspection of a workplace or part of a workplace such as on external sites, part of a factory, workshop, office or any other part of a building. How you intend to carry these out needs to form part of your **Risk Management** System and should include details of who will complete these inspections (a competent and trained person ONLY) and frequency of inspections. These must be defined within your company's written arrangements.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO COMPLETE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

The purpose of a safety inspection is to ensure that:

- the area is in a safe condition for the intended work to be undertaken
- all the health and safety requirements for that area have been complied with
- any hazards or non-compliances are identified and recommendations for any remedial actions required are clearly stated in a report.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A SAFETY INSPECTION

A checklist should be devised to identify all areas that may create a risk at work and may cover some/all of the following:

- safe access, egress and freedom from obstructions of passages and walkways, particularly where work areas straddle passages and walkways.
- suitable layout and positioning of workstations, particularly those involving display screen equipment.
- fire precautions
- adequacy of first-aid provisions
- relevant safety signs and notices are present
- plant and equipment is safe to use
- electrical equipment is safe to use and has been inspected.
- hazardous substances are properly used, handled and stored with the correct risk controls in place
- personal protective equipment is clean, stored correctly and not damaged.
- provisions for the prevention of falls
- storage and housekeeping
- workplace welfare provisions
- workplace environmental conditions
- behaviour of the workforce is in accordance with H&S rules
- safety communications

KEEPING RECORDS

It is important that whenever safety inspections are completed that a written record of findings and recommended actions are kept. These should be discussed with Managers or Departmental Supervisors to ensure faults or failings found, are put right as soon as possible. Recommended timescales for such actions should also be recorded to encourage closing out of actions. Such inspections should also form part of your agenda during safety, managerial and progress meetings, all of which should be minuted. This is a way in which a company can gauge safety performance, progress from previous inspections and provides evidence of the company's commitment to improving on its safety record.

ENSURE THE AUDITOR IS COMPETENT

It is important to ensure that the auditors you choose are competent to do the job and have received the appropriate training.

WE OFFER:- SITE INSPECTIONS AND AUDITING SERVICES

If elements of your company activities are site based, then we can conduct visits to assess working practices and to assess whether these follow your health and safety management system, safe working procedures and whether objectives of your company are being met externally. Recommendations will be given through a confidential and comprehensive audit report which clearly prioritises actions required. Photos will be taken on site and included

northants risk management solutions

within your inspection report. Hand written reports can be left on site to allow your site supervisor to carry out relevant improvement actions. Copies should also be retained for the Principal Contractor as proactive evidence of your company's health and safety standards.

During site audits tool box talks can also be conducted to your employees and subcontractors, evidence of which can also be kept on site.

Premises inspections are also completed as part of a comprehensive company audit and concentrates on processes, plant and equipment in use, to ascertain whether they are being managed and controlled sufficiently. These should be carried out for all working premises regardless of the service or industry. Breaches in H&S regulations will be identified and discussed with you during such inspections and a comprehensive report completed, detailing improvements required.

If your company does not have any arrangements in place for active monitoring then Northants Risk Management Solutions can complete and provide these individually or as part of a new health and safety policy system. Whatever your needs, we have the competent Specialists who can get this right for you to help you comply with health and safety legislation.

UP DATE: - CRANE NOTIFICATION RULES IMMINENT



Guidance relating to the forthcoming Notification of Conventional Tower Cranes Regulations 2010 has now been published. The regulations which come into force on 6th April 2010, require certain information about conventional tower cranes used on construction sites to be notified to the HSE. This includes:

- The types of tower cranes that need to be notified to the HSE
- Who needs to ensure that the notification is made
- When the notification needs to be made
- What information needs to be notified, and
- How the information should be notified.

The guidance leaflet (INDG 437) states that whoever has the responsibility for ensuring that the crane is thoroughly examined by a competent person, as required under the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations 1998, should also ensure that the notification is made to the HSE.

This leaflet can be downloaded from www.hse.gov/pubns/books/indg437.htm

TOOL BOX TALK OF THE MONTH: – CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDEOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)



Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health at risk. So the law requires employers to control exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health.

What are the hazards and who could be harmed?

Hazardous substances are used in all areas of manufacturing, production and construction. They include:

- substances used directly in work activities (e.g. adhesives, paints, cleaning agents);
- substances generated during work activities (e.g. fumes from welding);

Examples of the effects of hazardous substances include:

- skin irritation or dermatitis from skin contact
- asthma as a result of developing allergy to substances used at work
- losing consciousness overcome by toxic fumes
- cancer, which may appear long after the exposure to the chemical that caused it
- infection from bacteria and other micro-organisms (biological agents)

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS?

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). COSHH requires an employer to assess the risks and to prevent or adequately control exposure.

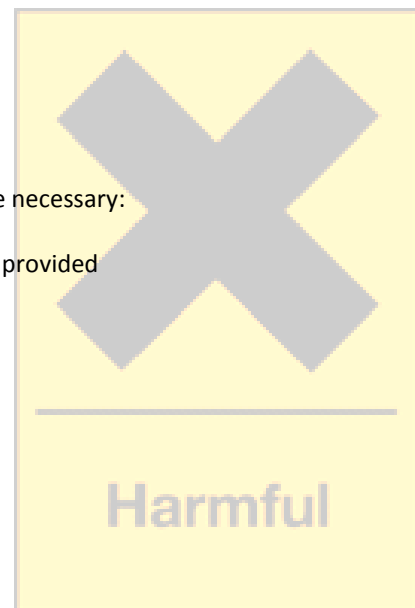
Controls required?

Assessments have to be conducted and controls need to be put into place. Where necessary:

- Use Personal Protective Equipment/ RPE (Respiratory Protective Equipment) provided
- Use equipment correctly
- Store hazardous substances correctly.
- Report any accidental spillages of chemicals/ paints etc.
- Report any hazardous conditions and practices that concern you.
- Do not eat in areas where there are substances hazardous to health
- Wash your hands before eating or drinking
- Co-operate with your employer to apply the COSHH regulations.

First Aid Arrangements for COSHH

Below are general first aid provisions based on a worse case scenario. Some chemicals have different properties and require different treatment. If in doubt get the individual to hospital immediately. Inform the hospital of the substance that they have been exposed to. As a guide:



MYTH OF THE MONTH:-

“THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT SLIPS AND TRIPS AND THEY DON'T REALLY HURT ANYONE”



THE REALITY

Most slips and trips are preventable and many happen when spills aren't cleared up or clutter tidied away. Last year, there were four fatalities and more than 10 000 employees were seriously injured when they had a slip or trip at work. This results in broken bones and time off work, costing the economy around £800 million per year. Simple mistakes can shatter lives ... your actions could help stop them from happening.

Don't take things for granted, cut corners or wait for someone else to do it. Clear up!

AND REMEMBER.....“DON`T LEARN SAFETY BY ACCIDENT”

Suite 5 Green Lodge Barn
Nobottle
Northants
NN7 4HD
T: 01604 651091
E: enquiries@northants-rms.com
W: northants-rms.com