

## ARTICLES:-PRE CAST CONCRETE PANEL KILLS FARM WORKER

A worker died when a one tone pre cast concrete panel, which he was trying to move to build a farm shed, toppled over and crushed him. Colleagues building a perimeter wall used a telescopic handler when the accident occurred 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008. They attached slings to the panel via the bolts and hooks provided, and hooked the slings over the forks of the telescopic handler. The panel was standing upright on the ground but still attached to the vehicles forks through the slings. The panel slipped off the forks and crushed the worker killing him instantly.

The HSE inspectors found that the method of suspending the panel from the slings supported by the forks did not allow the panel to rotate freely, as it would have done had it been supported by another device, such as a crane hook.

The family farm was fined £20,000. HSE inspector said "Unfortunately, the use of the pre-cast concrete panels to build farm buildings, is commonplace. It is also commonplace for farmers and workers to "have a go" at building constructions when they are not properly trained, qualified or equipped in structural engineering and health and safety practices.

## CO-OP IN BREACH OF FIRE REGULATIONS

The Co-operative Group has been fined £200,000 for having a lamentable approach towards fire safety. Hampshire Fire and rescue carried out fire inspection within Southampton stores in September 2007. The organisation failed to keep rear emergency exit doors unlocked for easy egress in an emergency, doors were also locked which required a security code to open between the storage and retail areas which prevented emergency doors being opened easily in the event of a fire.

The store manager also had no suitable and sufficient fire safety training and had failed to ensure that the fire alarm system was maintained and regularly checked. The judge at Southampton Crown Court summed up the case, "the Co-operative Group had been responsible for a potential death trap, given the severity of the fire safety failings and showed a lamentable approach to fire safety".

## INCORRECT DESIGN AND PLANNING LEADS TO COLLAPSED FLOOR

Design planning error led to a building collapse. The building designer and principal contractor on a construction job in Lancashire are accused of basic errors over an incident where a worker was buried by collapsing rubble. On 14 October 2008, two sub-contractors were installing beam and block flooring on the second floor of the site in Kirkham. The men were attaching the flooring to a concrete block pillar, which was used to support the first and second floors. But the pillar was only resting on the ground floor and had not been secured as far down as the building's foundations. Consequently, as they were installing the floor on the second level, the pillar gave way and both floors collapsed.

One of the men managed to hold on to a wall as the floors collapsed, but the other fell two floors and was buried underneath the rubble. He was freed by emergency services and was taken to hospital, where he underwent several operations to repair a broken leg.

Following an investigation the HSE prosecuted the building's designer, Peter Wallace of the Wallace Partnership, and the principal contractor, Jack Smith (Builders) Ltd. Both were sentenced on 12 May, with Peter Wallace fined £4000 and ordered to pay £12,318 in costs.

In mitigation, Wallace reported that work had started on the site before the final design plans were completed. He told the court that he would ensure that work would not begin on any future project until the final design plans have been reviewed and a safe method of work has been agreed.

## CHECK YOUR ARRANGEMENTS FOR:-LONE WORKING

### DEFINITION OF LONE WORKING

The HSE defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. There is no general legal prohibition on lone working, but it is prohibited in some work situations and activities. In these circumstances, certain regulations specify the requirements for specific supervision, assistance or accompanied working when work is hazardous or involves certain categories of workers. Examples of lone working are:

- People working alone in a premises such as in a small workshop, kiosk, shop or office
- People working from home
- People working separately from others such as within a factory and warehouse
- People working outside normal hours such as for security, cleaners and repair staff

### ASSESS THE RISKS

Lone working can bring additional risks, such as the inability to summon help in an emergency, so a risk assessment must be conducted, taking into account the hazards of the specific job and employees involved. Certain employees may be at particular risk when working alone, such as new and expectant mothers.

### WRITTEN PROCEDURES

Employers must develop procedures to control risks and protect employees from the dangers of lone working. Employers should ensure:-

- Lone workers have full knowledge of the hazards and risks they are exposed to
- Lone workers know what to do if something goes wrong
- Someone else knows the whereabouts of the lone workers and what they are doing.

Arrangements should be in place to protect or assist lone workers in the event of fire, accident or illness or an incident of violence. These need to be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and relevant to working practices, risks involved and vulnerable groups.

### SUPERVISION

The level of supervision for lone workers should be determined by a risk assessment to ensure it is consistent with the possible risks and that there is a system for maintaining contact.

### TRAINING

Lone workers should receive appropriate training:-

- to ensure they are competent and able to deal with foreseeable problems.
- in the use of any necessary tools and equipment.
- how to check the tools or equipment are safe and correct for their intended use, bearing in mind any increased risk to lone workers.

## WE OFFER:- REVIEW OF YOUR LONE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Northants Risk Management Solutions can review your existing arrangements or provide arrangements for Lone Working to ensure that your company is compliant with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This is available as a separate service or can be incorporated into your Risk Management Package as part of your policy review.

## UP DATE: - MEPS BACK ACTION TO HARMONISE FINES FOR ROAD TRANSPORT OFFENDERS



MEPs have adopted a resolution calling for efforts to harmonise the level of fines across EU countries in relation to lorry drivers who commit working time-related road safety infringements. The resolution also calls for more frequent checks by national authorities, both at the roadside and the road haulier's premises, and suggests that the European Commission create an "effective and appropriate co-ordination instrument at European level" to help train and co-ordinate inspection bodies and gather statistical information.

The digital tachograph should also be improved as an instrument for checking, making it harder for haulage companies to falsify this information and their records.

## TOOL BOX TALK OF THE MONTH: – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)



The dangers arising from many hazardous activities can only be controlled by the use or wearing of PPE. In many cases, it is not possible to completely eliminate hazards by other means. This talk will cover the measures necessary to ensure that the use of PPE is effective.

Wearing the proper clothing and personal protective equipment in the working environment is critical. Appropriate clothing is your first and often only line of defence against many safety and health hazards.

Proper clothing is key. Simple as it may sound, you must dress for the occasion. Wearing stylish clothing can create a bigger hazard or may not provide protection from hazards while you work. Proper clothing that protects is the key. It is not uncommon to hear about tragedies that have taken place when a worker who was wearing loose clothing got too close to an operating machine and was drawn into the machine. Machines are powerful and unforgiving! Loose clothing is never appropriate in an industrial workplace.

What is PPE - PPE is equipment or clothing worn to protect the user from known hazards in the workplace. In construction, the most commonly worn items of PPE are safety helmets and safety footwear.

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## Limitations:

1. PPE will only protect the user.
2. It must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions; do not misuse PPE.
3. The actual level of effectiveness is difficult to assess.
4. It must be in good condition to be fully effective; do not mistreat PPE, your health or life might depend upon it.

## What your employer must do:

1. Assess the risks to employees' health and safety arising from the work activities.
2. Try to organise work activities so that PPE is not necessary.
3. Where PPE is necessary, select appropriate items that suit the wearer and are made to the required standard.
4. Supply employees with the necessary PPE at no cost.
5. Train employees to use it, and explain its limitations where this is necessary.
6. Ensure compatibility if more than one item of PPE is worn.
7. Ensure that PPE is maintained where appropriate.
8. Replace defective or lost PPE, at no cost to the user.

**What you must do:** - Protect your feet. Standard footwear for most industries, should be sturdy leather footwear. Preferably, boots equipped with safety toes. Training shoes, offer little or no protection against worksite hazards.

Hand Protection - gloves are inexpensive and easily available protection which guards against many hazards. They can protect hands from exposures ranging from chemical spills and cuts, to heat and cold. Hand protection comes in huge assortment of styles, materials and sizes. All of them are made to protect your hands from specific hazards. It is important to select the proper kind and style of glove to effectively protect hands from the hazards that may be encountered. How often has a nearby worker cleaned parts or washed the grease from their hands with gasoline or a solvent of some kind. Don't take the unnecessary risk! Select and use the proper hand protection.

Head Protection and Eye Protection. Hard hats and safety glasses should be worn at the work site whenever there is an overhead hazard or potential for an object to enter the eyes. A hard hat can not only protect you from the rain, it can save your life! The benefits received from eye protection are significant Safety glasses are a sure way to help save your eyesight!

1. Use PPE in accordance with instructions and training given.
2. Return PPE to its storage, where provided, after use.
3. Take reasonable care of your PPE and report its loss or defects to your employer.
4. Never work without PPE when it is known to be necessary.

Jewellery in the workplace can also be a hazard that is often overlooked. Rings, bracelets, and chains can be the cause of a much more severe hand related accident. Common sense should be considered when wearing your jewellery and best left at home.

Dressing for the workplace, by wearing the right kind of clothing helps protect you from injury. It is your first line of defence against worksite hazards. Carefully choose your work clothing and the personal protective equipment which will best protect you for *your* job. Improper clothing is an invitation for an accident to occur.

**REMEMBER – PPE can be a life-saver; use it properly and look after it, and it should look after you**

Date:

Company Name:

Site:

Completed by:

The undersigned have attended:

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## MYTH OF THE MONTH:-

YOU DON'T NEED TO SECURE YOUR LOAD IF YOU'RE JUST DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD



## THE REALITY

If not properly secured, vehicle loads can become unsafe, even over a short distance.

Loads that haven't been firmly tied down increase the risk of vehicle rollover and spillage. They risk the lives of drivers and other road users, and can also cause annoying traffic disruption.

More than 1200 people a year are injured as a result of unsafe loads, and millions of pounds are lost in damaged goods.

Don't take the risk – make sure your load is restrained and contained!

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

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