
CONSTRUCTION INFONET - ISSUE 04.06

NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Progress with the HSE construction programme

In March 2006 the Chief Inspector for Construction, Stephen Williams, gave a presentation to Health and Safety Commission on [progress with the HSE construction programme](#). There have been some significant outcomes since 2000:

- the fatal accident rate for construction workers has fallen by over 27%;
- the major injury rate for construction employees has fallen by over 24%;
- the over 3 day rate for construction employees has fallen by over 34%.

The Construction Programme is entering its fifth year and the headline target is to deliver a 5% reduction in the industry's fatal and major injury rate by 2007/08 and to deliver a cultural change in the industry over a ten-year period.

HSE plans to build on the success of recent years. Some examples of how we intend achieve further impact are: using the CDM regulations and their implementation as an opportunity to make a step change; promoting best practice in public sector procurement; driving forward the messages in all parts of the UK e.g. through a Welsh Summit and the Scottish Construction Forum.

Construction fatal injuries October 2005 - March 2006

The latest construction [fatal injury statistics](#) can be found on the HSE website. However, some brief comments on the construction industry worker deaths during the last six months are made below in order to raise awareness of how these tragic deaths occurred and to promote further preventative action.

The numbers of deaths appear to reflect the findings reported recently to the HSC. See above. Some key points concerning fatal injuries during the last six months include:

- *Falls whilst working at height* continue to account for the largest number of deaths. Falls from working platforms and ladders dominated the fatal injuries during this period. There was only one fatal fall through a fragile rooflight which may indicate improvements in this area which for many years has dominated the construction fatal falls statistics
- *Lifting operations and collapsing structures* continue to claim a number of lives. The safety of lifting operations depends crucially on the systematic planning and supervision of the lifting operation.

GB-wide 'Height Aware' campaign 2006

During May and June 2006 HSE and Local Authorities across GB are conducting a "Height Aware" campaign aimed at raising awareness of the risks of working at height and the importance of selecting the right equipment for the job. All industries are involved and Inspectors will be visiting workplaces and meeting with dutyholders in their offices.

The target audience are those who carry out and procure building and plant maintenance work including: electricians, mechanical and electrical fitters, painters and decorators, facilities managers, commercial landlords, estates and building managers etc.

The campaign will be promoted on May 10th by Lord Hunt, Minister for Health and Safety at work at the Access Forum Conference, part of Safety and Health Expo at the NEC Birmingham. A campaign pack will be available in coming weeks in hard copy and on the HSE website.



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Free Safety and Health Awareness Days for building maintenance contractors and clients

The 'Height Aware' campaign will include a series of at least 14 half-day Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) across the country aimed at building and maintenance contractors. These events will include practical equipment demonstrations.

More details will follow in the coming weeks. The first event in the Eastern Region will take place on Tuesday 20th June at Stevenage Football Club. Contact Colin Ryan - colin.ryan@hse.gsi.gov.uk or Karl Howes - karl.howes@hse.gsi.gov.uk to book a place.

Some recent court cases

[Case 1](#) a property developer and contractor was fined £32,000 with costs of £6,233. Speaking after the case the HSE investigating inspector said: "Property developers are expected to organise and plan health and safety effectively and take appropriate measures. Where standards are poor, HSE will prosecute those responsible, even if there has been no injury, as in this case"

[Case 2](#) a contractor was fined £45,000 following an incident in which a 36-year old labourer was buried beneath the first floor of a new building which collapsed causing serious injury. Speaking after the case, HSE investigating inspector said the incident "could have been avoided.... contractors working on temporary structures should conduct suitable risk assessments and take steps to prevent danger from their collapse"

Health and safety on public sector construction projects

A recent conference '[Buying for Life – Construction in the Public Sector](#)' has emphasised the importance of Government being an exemplary client and sharing best practice on completing projects on time and to budget.

Lord Hunt, Minister for Health and Safety, said at this major construction event. "I want the public sector to be exemplary construction clients. I want them to 'buy for life' – meaning they become clients who influence the design, construction, maintenance and use of a building, and help raise health and safety standards for all workers involved in such projects." He went on to say "The award of the Olympic Games to London in 2012 offers an ideal opportunity for all those involved in construction to show how they can work together to improve client performance on public sector projects."

"Government has much to gain from raising its game and controlling construction projects more effectively. It is only by taking ownership of health and safety performance, showing leadership in setting standards and working in partnership with the industry that we will drive out poor health and safety on schemes that we are responsible for."

I hope you find this information helpful.

Philip Poynter

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