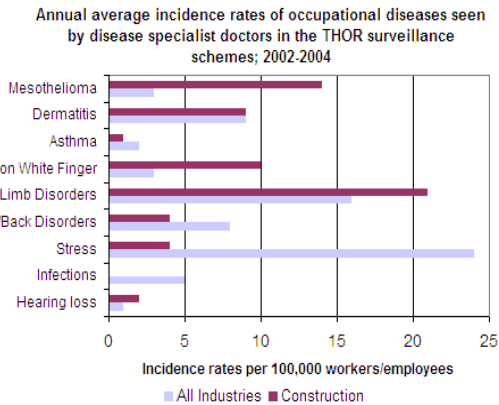

CONSTRUCTION INFONET - ISSUE 02.06
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CONSTRUCTION

Construction industry health priorities



In 2004/05, the construction sector carried a prevalence rate of [work related illness](#) similar to the average for all industries. Musculoskeletal conditions, the effects of noise and vibration and asbestos related diseases are the dominant work-related health conditions in construction. The incidence of stress is substantially lower than the all industry average. A new entry on the HSE website explains the wider HSE health agenda and what it means for the way HSE goes about its work. See [HSE Health Agenda](#).

- *Asbestos in buildings*

We are working to secure a step change in the control of exposure to asbestos . The licensing and monitoring of removal work by [licensed asbestos removal](#) contractors is an important part of this work. In addition, [building maintenance, repair and refurbishment](#) is an area where greater awareness and control of asbestos is required.

- *Occupational health management*

This involves promoting the management of risk rather symptoms. The HSE Construction Sector has produced a draft Occupational Health Management Model (OHMM) for the construction industry that will be rolled out promoted in the coming months

- *Supply chain initiatives*

Work is taking place throughout the supply chain regarding [handling kerbs](#), building blocks and pannelled products. Similar work is also underway in respect of [HAVS](#) and [noise](#) to eliminate and reduce health risks with cost-effective solutions.

Some of the practical aspects of this agenda were included in the Construction *Healthy Handling* Initiative Campagin during 2005. See [Healthy Handling](#)

FREE occupational health awareness event 15th March 2006



This half-day meeting entitled *Managing the risk, not the symptom* will be held at **Stevenage Borough Football Club on Wednesday 15 March 2006** and delegates can attend a morning or afternoon session [Click here for details and to book a place](#) or just call Frances Kennedy on 01582 444323. The main health hazards are explained and practical advice, guidance and demonstrations provided to help control the health risks. Issues covered will include: *manual handling; skin problems; hand-arm vibration; noise and; asbestos.*

As a recipient of *Construction Infonet* this event may be suitable for you. In any event, I will be grateful if you could alert smaller contractors who work on your projects so that they may take advantage of this half-day FREE session.



HSE Construction Division London, East and South East Unit
Acting Head of Operations: David Rothery

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ISSUES IN CONSTRUCTION

Asbestos management in buildings

Asbestos-related diseases are currently responsible for up to 3500 deaths a year in Britain. There is usually a long delay (between 15 and 60 years) between first exposure to asbestos and the first symptoms of disease. Many of those suffering today from asbestos-related diseases worked in the building trades. They were carpenters, joiners, shopfitters, plumbers, electricians, gas service engineers etc. They were exposed to asbestos fibres in their day-to-day work with asbestos containing materials or because work with asbestos was carried out near them.

Clients have a clear [duty to manage asbestos](#) containing materials in their premises and to provide information to those carrying out construction work. In addition, planning supervisors and contractors must obtain and use information from clients to ensure that any foreseeable contact with asbestos materials is properly assessed and controlled. The HSE website contains very useful FREE information. Click here for [more information on asbestos](#).

Company fined for failing to manage asbestos

A company was fined £50,000 with prosecution costs of £86,000 after failing to maintain asbestos containing materials (ACMs) on their premises and not adhering to its own procedures. Air samples showed a high level of asbestos and the primary source of contamination was from damaged and poorly maintained asbestos insulation.

The HSE investigating inspector, said: "Asbestos is the single greatest cause of work-related death; breathing in asbestos fibres can lead to serious diseases, including cancer. This case demonstrates that HSE takes the failure to properly manage the risks from asbestos extremely seriously" See [Press Release](#)

Asbestos cement

[Asbestos cement](#) can also present a health risk during building demolition or dismantling if not properly controlled. However, asbestos cement roofs continue to present a significant fall from height risk as the following recent Court cases illustrate. These cases show that such prosecutions may be instituted by HSE whether or not a person is injured.

[Case 1](#) - A company that erects steel-framed farm buildings has been fined £8,000 plus £1,756 costs for failing to ensure the safety at work of its employees. The injured was one of four carrying out roof repair work by walking across fibre cement roof sheets without protection either from falling through the fragile sheets or from the edge of the roof. The work was also being carried out without supervision or risk assessment.

[Case 2](#) - A construction company has been fined £4,000 following an incident in which two workers were found walking over a fragile roof.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Philip Poynter

H M PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR

HSE Construction Division
London, East & South East Unit
February 2006