

## CONSTRUCTION INFONET - ISSUE 06.06

### NEWS AND INITIATIVES

#### Important changes to *Construction Infonet*

*Construction Infonet* was launched in 2003 as a local initiative, providing useful information to clients, designers, planning supervisors, contractors and project health and safety specialists. This popular service, delivered by fax or email direct to users' desktops, is to be extended nationally.

HSE will now offer subscription to *Construction Infonet* as part of a FREE GB-wide e-bulletin. Although it will no longer be possible to receive *Construction Infonet* by fax, email recipients should notice little change to the service. The monthly email will link to the usual *Construction Infonet* file which can be viewed, downloaded or printed as you wish. The new arrangements start in July 2006. Existing recipients will be subscribed to the new service automatically, but may unsubscribe at any time, and re-subscribe via the [HSE Construction](#) web pages when the new system goes live.

#### Recent construction fatalities

Construction fatalities during 2006 show a reduction in deaths due to falls involving [fragile materials](#), [ladders](#), [scaffolds](#) and [towers](#). This may well reflect the positive action taken by persons involved in construction projects to assess and control work at height. However, as illustrated by the recent prosecution below, falls through fragile materials remain a major hazard, requiring careful attention from contractors and building [owners / occupiers](#) to prevent injury.

Other recent deaths include: two workmen killed by electricity whilst refurbishing domestic properties; two persons killed when walls collapsed whilst mechanical plant was working nearby, and; a major scaffold collapse following which an injured workman died in hospital.

Lifting operations continue to cause concern: three further deaths have occurred when structures were being lifted and positioned. Fortunately, by working together, we can further reduce recurrence of such tragic events. The latest [Construction injury statistics](#) are published on the HSE website.

#### 'Height Aware' campaign

The *Height Aware* campaign is now taking place and will run until the end of June 2006. HSE webpages have been updated with a wide range of [relevant information and tools](#). The campaign is aimed at those who carry out or procure building and plant maintenance work. There is still time to attend one of the many [awareness events](#) being held nationwide.

See also the May 2006 issue of [Site Safe News](#)

#### Designing for safety

Two websites contain a useful and growing number of case studies which designers and contractors may find helpful. The [Design Best Practice](#) network was formed in 2004. You can submit your own case study and become a member of Design Best Practice. The Engineering Construction Industry Association ([ECIA](#)) [website](#) also contains health and safety case studies. For example, one case study illustrates [landing steel columns](#) more safely.

#### Recent court cases

[Case 1](#) - a roofing contractor was fined £50,000, with prosecution costs of £23,000, after a trainee roofer fell 8m through a rooflight at a retail store during rooflight replacement works in January 2005. The prosecuting HSE Inspector, said: "*It is unfortunate that on this occasion simple and cost effective measures were not put in place which would have prevented the fall. Preventing such injuries is the*

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*focus of the current Height Aware campaign, where we are asking people 'to take a moment and not a fall'.*

[Case 2](#) - two scaffolding businesses were fined £2000 in fines and costs after failing to notify HSE about an incident, in which an employee was injured whilst working on scaffolding which did not have an intermediate guardrail to prevent falls.

#### HSE construction priorities for 2006/07

During 2006/07 priorities for HSE Construction field teams will include:

- *refurbishment and building maintenance work* - which accounts for 60% of all accidents in the construction industry, but only 40% of construction activity;
- *housebuilding* - which accounts for the highest proportion of accidents in new build work;
- *urban commercial new build* - which has a similar accident performance to housebuilding. Urban new build brings with it significant problems including site clearance, and tight sites, causing transport and lifting problems;
- *early interventions* with major projects will continue, as will *Lead Inspector* interventions;
- *client / designer involvement* - where inspectors track back from investigations or inspections and;
- *worker engagement* - by raising awareness of duties and good practice.

#### Role of director leadership in securing good health and safety standards

HSE-commissioned research has produced thirty-four case studies that highlight boards of directors who provide leadership and direction in occupational health and safety, showing what they do and what the benefits are to their organisations. The [research report](#) concludes that:

- organisations report a wide range of drivers for board-level direction of health and safety- mostly business reasons, along with the risk of infringing existing health and safety law;
- they are not dissuaded from having a named director responsible for health and safety by the prospect of being sued or prosecuted, due to the improved standard of health and safety management that health and safety leadership achieves, and the over-riding need to reduce the risk to the organisation from poor health and safety performance;
- how health and safety leadership is implemented varies between organisations, but is commonly achieved without needing high levels of health and safety training for directors;
- further promotion of health and safety leadership needs to 'advise' the 'mostly convinced' of good practice, while persuading the 'unconvinced' of the business case for health and safety leadership;
- case studies need to be promoted through 'management' channels rather than solely via health and safety media.

I hope you find this information helpful.

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