

CONSTRUCTION INFONET - ISSUE 05.06

NEWS AND INITIATIVES

'Height Aware' campaign

The *'Height Aware'* campaign is now live and focuses on the risks of work at height and the importance of selecting the right equipment for each job.

[New and practical information on work at height](#) now available on the HSE website features:

- selecting suitable equipment;
- selecting competent contractors;
- protecting against falls during minor roof maintenance work;
- selecting and using fall protection equipment and;
- safe use of ladders and stepladders.

The target audience is those who carry out or procure building and plant maintenance work. The new web pages will be relevant to those working on new build commercial or housing projects.

If you are designer, planning supervisors or principal contractor on a CDM project please encourage awareness of this campaign especially among any smaller contractors or clients with whom you come into contact.

FREE awareness and demonstration events during May and June

Falls from height during *building and plant maintenance* work are a major cause of fatal and serious injury at work. HSE has organised several FREE half-day awareness and demonstration events, designed specifically for managers of building and plant maintenance businesses, and their clients. New and innovative access equipment will be demonstrated by major plant suppliers and hirers, whilst HSE staff will be on hand to give advice.

HSE website now contains a [full list of 'Height Aware' events across GB](#). I am sure that contractors and clients will find these half-day events helpful in managing the business and personal risks of work at height, especially during building and plant maintenance work.

These *'Height Aware'* events are aimed primarily at small and medium sized enterprises which procure or undertake building or plant maintenance work. Please forward this issue of *Construction Infonet* to any clients or contractors in this category who may wish to book places.

Scaffolds: stability and work near overhead power lines

Most injuries involving scaffolding occur when workers fall from platforms that are not provided with the required edge protection, or where protection has been removed and not replaced. However, scaffolds can also collapse with devastating results. Following a recent major incident, HSE has issued a [scaffolding safety alert](#) reminding everyone of the factors that must to be kept under review if the scaffold stability is to be maintained.

Another incident highlights the [danger when erecting scaffolds near overhead power lines](#). A contractor escaped with a £2,000 fine and, more importantly, his life, after he and his employee suffered electrical burns when a scaffold tube came into contact with an 11,000-volt overhead line. They were erecting scaffolding at a domestic property.

The HSE website contains [useful information on electrical risks](#) and control measures required to prevent danger from underground and overhead electrical conductors.

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Noise and vibration road shows

Over 1.1 million people are at risk from high levels of noise at work and about 1.7 million people are at risk from Hand Arm Vibration (HAV). HSE and the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) are running four [road shows on Noise and Vibration](#) giving no-nonsense advice for employers on recent changes in EU regulations.

Construction audiences are especially welcome to these events which cover: what the new regulations mean in practice; practical risk management/solutions and; arranging effective health surveillance.

Some recent construction industry court cases

[Case 1](#) - Contractors were fined £350,000 after shuttering fell and struck a workman whilst it was being lifted into place. The HSE spokesperson said after the case that those "involved in lifting operations on building sites should ensure they are properly planned and appropriately supervised. The risk of serious injury, or worse from badly planned lifting operations is well known in the industry; as are the measures needed to manage them"

[Case 2](#) - A ground investigation company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £30,000 following an investigation by HSE after a workman suffered major injuries after he became entangled in a lorry mounted rotating borehole drill. The investigating inspector said that such accidents "are eminently foreseeable when using such large, dangerous pieces of machinery without the proper safeguards being in place.....guidance produced by the BDA (British Drilling Association) with HSE was specifically designed to deal with such situations and makes it extremely clear how companies involved in such activities should go about complying with the relevant law."

[Case 3](#) - A contractor was fined £60,000 after a mobile concrete pump operator was seriously injured when compressed air was used to blow waste concrete from a pipeline. During this operation the discharge end of the pipeline recoiled striking the workman and the sponge ball used to clear the inside of the pipeline was ejected over the site hoarding, narrowly missing a member of public. The HSE spokesperson said "Anyone carrying out concrete pumping operations on construction sites should ensure they have safe systems of work in place for cleaning out the pipeline and in particular when dealing with blockages"

HSE stand at the Site Equipment Demonstration (SED) 2006

HSE will, as usual, have a presence at [SED](#) held this year at Corby from 17-19 May 2006.. The HSE stand will reinforce the work at height theme through some novel and interesting exhibitions and demonstrations of equipment for safe work at height.

Third edition of *Health and Safety in Construction* now available

This [third edition](#) and takes into account new legislation including the *Work at Height Regulations 2005* and incorporates recent advances and good practice. Aimed at clients, designers, contractors and individual workers it applies to work on all kinds of construction projects.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Philip Poynter

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