



## KERB LAYING

### *Reduce the strain*

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been working with kerb-laying contractors to reduce the number of injuries caused by the manual handling of heavy kerbstones. Most kerbs are still lifted into place manually despite the risk that even a single kerb can cause injury.

HSE recently agreed with kerb-laying contractors to eliminate manual handling of kerbs in favour of mechanical lifting aids. Many contractors are already using mechanical aids such as vacuum lifters that can be mounted on mini-diggers.

The forum agreed a timetable in which the industry should implement the use of mechanical lifting aids:

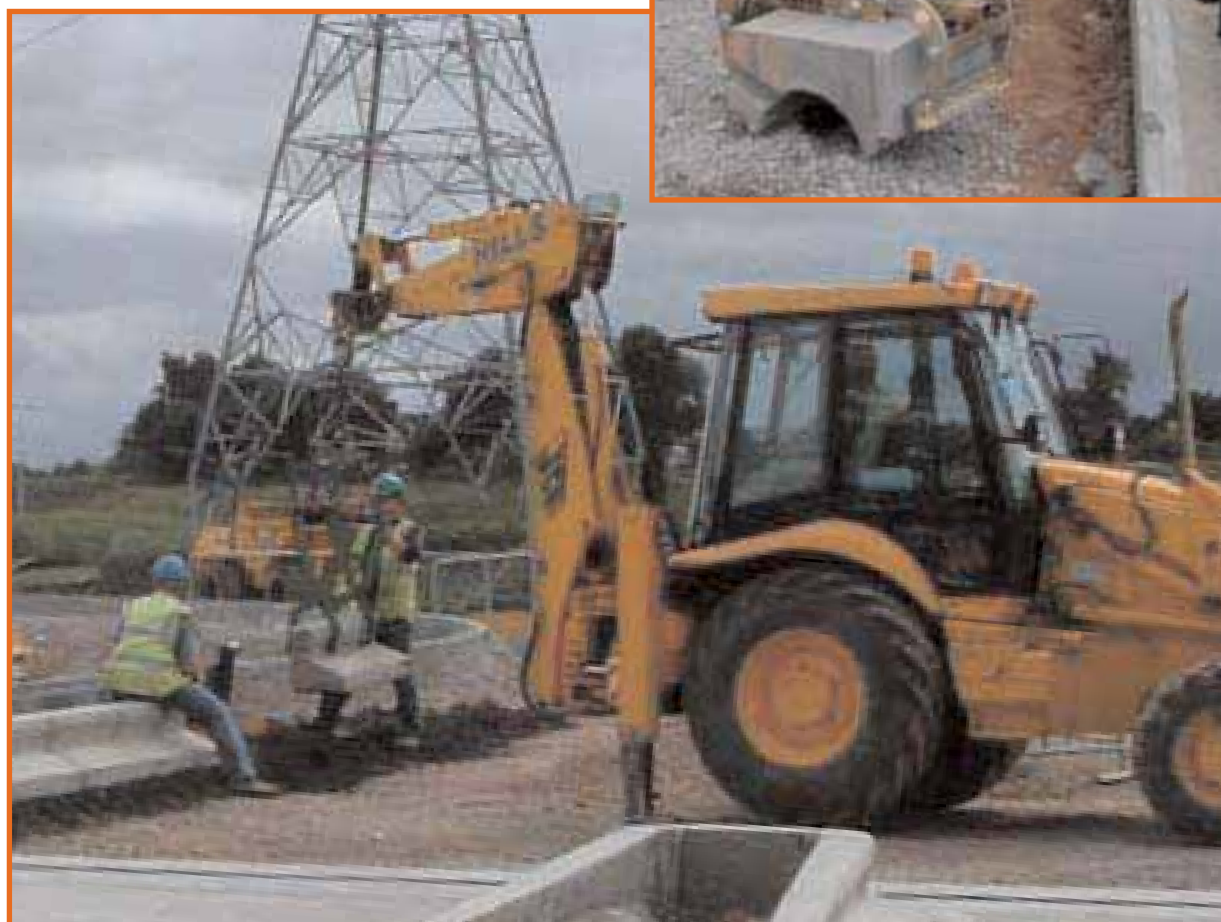
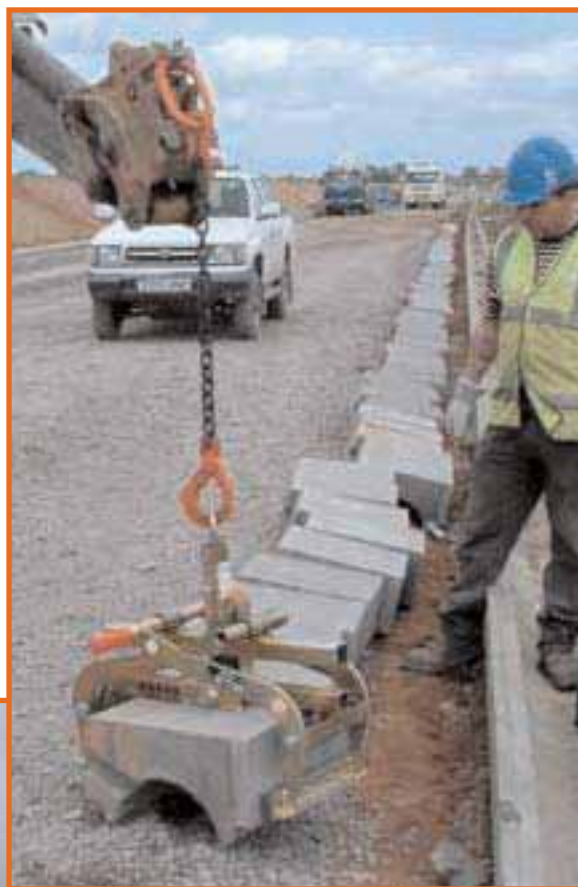
- **immediately** for longer stretches of new build road;
- **June 2004** for short stretches;
- **January 2005** for short-term maintenance projects, spot kerbing, repairs and replacement.

In the meantime, all parties involved in kerb laying need to review their risk assessments and develop an action plan to introduce mechanical handling. HSE will be enforcing the regulations to ensure that the appropriate measures are in place within the agreed timeframe.

*Kerb laying contractors will be using mechanised lifting aids instead of manual handling*

HSE will be demonstrating mechanical lifting equipment at the SED exhibition in Milton Keynes on May 18-20. There will be a display of vacuum lifting aids attached to a mini-digger to lift heavy kerbstones. HSE Inspectors will be on hand to answer your questions.

Come and see us on Stand 180 at SED, Fen Farm, Milton Keynes. Register at [www.sed.co.uk](http://www.sed.co.uk)



## HEALTHY HANDLING BLITZ

HSE Inspectors issued 66 enforcement notices during one week of a recent month-long 'Healthy Handling' blitz in London and the South East. The initiative focused on site order and organisation, manual handling, wet cement and hand-held vibrating equipment and tools.

Inspectors found that many construction clients, designers and contractors need to improve their assessment and management of health risks. Over 350 sites of all sizes were inspected during the second week of March.

The findings of the blitz included:

- sites using cement without proper facilities for washing;
- inappropriate manual handling of heavy loads;
- vibrating tools being used by workers unaware of the safe exposure period; and
- approximately 20% of all projects visited required enforcement action on the target health issues or other risks.

Commenting on the initiative, HSE Chief Inspector for Construction Kevin Myers said: "While developing cement dermatitis or vibration white finger is unlikely to kill someone, it can result in significant injury and ultimately force someone out of their profession. Effective controls on exposure to these occupational health risks can reduce or prevent injury and ill health experienced by workers in the construction industry. We are now looking to clients, designers, planning supervisors and contractors to take account of these hazards well before work starts on site."

HSE has updated manual handling guidance helping employers and employees to take account of improved knowledge of the risks from manual handling and how to avoid them.

*Manual Handling: Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) L23* is available from HSE Books priced £8.95.

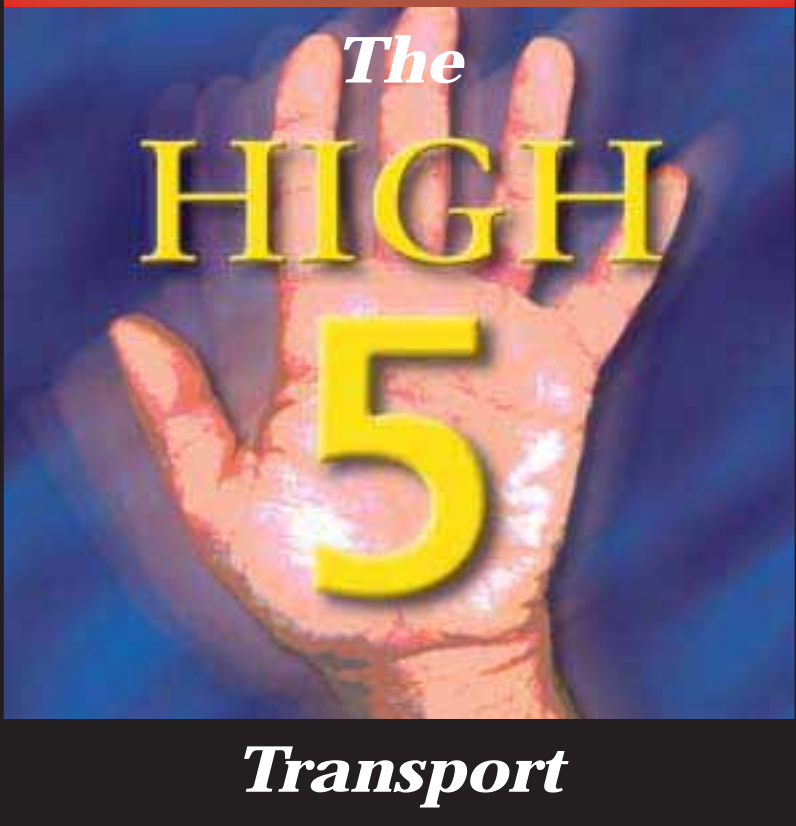
*Getting to grips with manual handling* INDG143(rev2) free single copies and in packs of 10 priced £5.00 from HSE Books, and on the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf)

See back page for details how to order this and other HSE priced and free publications.



*How NOT to lift a kerbstone*

# FOCUS ON



## Transport - *The good, the bad and the ugly*

### the good



### the good

On all building sites it is important to keep machines and people apart as the person always comes off worst in a collision! Often deliveries and men turning up for work arrive at the same time, making the site entrance a critical place to control

movements of both people and machines onto site. This is not just important at the site entrance but also throughout the site. It is both good practice and a legal requirement to ensure that pedestrian workers can move safely around site.

November's issue of *Site safe news* listed the High 5 priority areas for site safety. Just to remind you, they are:

High 1. *The Basics: Tidy sites and decent welfare*

High 2. *Falls from height*

High 3. *Manual handling*

High 4. *Transport*

High 5. *Asbestos*



In this issue we're focusing on **High 4 - Transport**.

A significant number of site accidents involve people using or working near site vehicles such as excavators, telehandlers, dumpers, MEWPs, road sweepers and similar plant. These vehicles are nearly always large items of equipment and contact with them often leads to death or serious injury.

Plant overturning, being trapped or run over (especially during reversing) and being struck or crushed by counterweights during slewing are all common causes of accidents.

While inadequate planning and control of work are the root causes of the majority of construction transport accidents, the most common immediate causes are:

- inadequate separation between vehicles and pedestrians;
- vehicles operated in such a manner to cause them to overturn or fall;
- unintentional movement caused by poor parking, brake maintenance or inadvertent contact with controls; and
- lack of driver competence.

It is estimated that around 150 people have died in this way during construction work in the last ten years. These accidents are not inevitable and can be avoided.

Remember to keep safe when using construction plant. Ensure you have the following three things:

- safe site - suitable traffic routes and adequate separation between pedestrians and vehicles;
- safe vehicles - correct type and properly maintained; and
- safe drivers - work practices including driver training.

Copies of *The High 5: Five ways to reduce risk on site* INDG384 are available free from HSE Books and from the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg384.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg384.pdf)

### the bad



### the bad

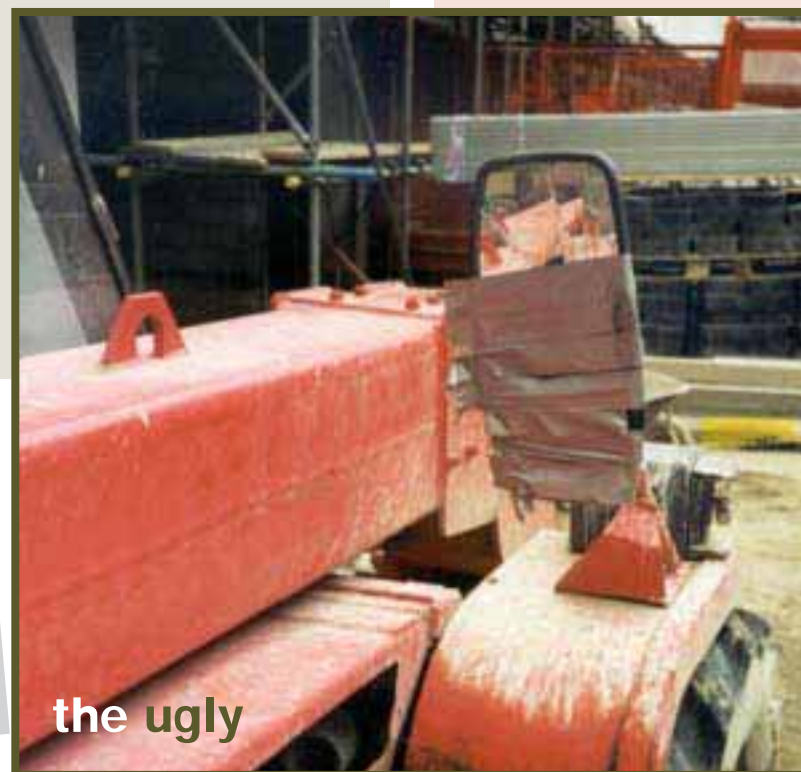
One icy morning a metal tracked excavator was being used on an icy slope to repair a riverbank. The vehicle slipped down the very slight incline into the river and landed on its side, nearly filling the whole cab with freezing water. The escape window was jammed shut and the operator was only saved from certain death by the quick actions of a man walking his dog. The man got over to the cab and with the aid of one of the work team who threw him a hammer, he managed to break a window and rescue the extremely cold and shaken operator.

### the ugly

Large plant and equipment have large areas which are 'blind' to the operator. Reversing aids such as mirrors are easily damaged and CCTV cameras need to be kept clean. As part of your start of shift/day make sure that:

- mirrors are unbroken and correctly positioned;
- cameras are working and lenses are free from mud and dust;
- if reversing aids are not working correctly, report it and do not use the machine until repairs are made.

### the ugly



Why not use this page of *Site safe news* as a poster to put up in your site office?

# CEMENT DERMATITIS

*- still a problem!*



Allergic dermatitis caused by cement use

**D**ermatitis due to cement still affects thousands of construction workers every year. Those at risk include plumbers, carpenters and electricians as well as regular cement users such as bricklayers and labourers.

A major cause is an allergy to the chrome in cement. This may develop after years of trouble-free work in the trade, leading to a false sense of security.

*'I've been in the trade for years - never had a problem with my hands'.*

This means that skilled men in their 40s and 50s can develop a problem and be unable to continue doing the work they've trained to do.

Dermatitis may also continue even after stopping work with cement - a long-term problem that can ruin personal and social lives. The key to preventing this happening is to recognise the problem early on and take action by:

- reducing contact as far as possible;
- washing with warm water and soap;
- carrying out simple and regular skin checks.

If a problem persists, get it checked by a health professional as early as you can.

## Case study

**A 49-year-old bricklayer's hands suddenly exploded into redness and blistering.**

He had been used to getting some dryness and cracking of the skin on his hands, especially during the winter months, but this was something else. He began to lose sleep, not only from the severe itching (which was bad enough) but also from worry as to how on earth he was going to be able to continue working. He had only just moved into a new house and hadn't yet got used to the bigger mortgage payments.

## Work at Height Regulations update

**T**he Health and Safety Commission (HSC) completed its consultation on proposals for the Work At Height Regulations on 2 April 2004. The draft regulations set out the requirements for the management of risks from working at height including:

- planning and organising work at height;
- selecting work equipment for work at height with specific requirements for scaffolding, working platforms, fall protection, ropes, and ladders; and
- managing risks from fragile surfaces and falling objects.

The proposed regulations would require employers to carry out a risk assessment and to properly plan and organise work at height. Where work can be carried out safely other than at height, you should do so.

If it can't, you should take steps to prevent falls using work equipment as appropriate. You should then reduce the distance and consequences of any remaining fall risks, again using appropriate work equipment.

It is also proposed that the regulations replace the requirements in the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 for preventing falls.

Provided employers and contractors continue to follow good practice in managing risks from work at height and in working on or near fragile surfaces, they should be able to fully comply with the proposed regulations.

Final regulations, taking into account comments made during consultation, should come into force by the end of this year.



## HAVE YOUR SAY ON CEMENT

**T**he Health and Safety Commission is inviting firms to comment on a proposed ban on high-chromium cement, a known cause of allergic dermatitis.

The ban would protect builders, bricklayers, tilers and anyone who uses cement, concrete, mortar, grout and tile adhesive. The ban would apply to cement with more than two parts per million of chromium VI. At present, most cement used in the UK contains more than this level of chromium VI.

The consultation document is available on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd195.htm>. The deadline for comments is 28 May 2004.

## Constructing Better Health

**H**ave you ever worried about your job affecting your health? A ground breaking pilot scheme is set to bring long-term benefits to the health of construction workers in the near future.

The industry-led 'Constructing Better Health' pilot scheme will offer advice and guidance on improving workers' health. The initiative aims to reduce exposure to key health risks and will provide access to free health screening.

The pilot scheme is set to run for 18-24 months and is expected to start in October this year. Keep an eye on the HSE's construction website [www.hse.gov.uk/construction](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction) from June onwards and watch *Safe site news* for further news about the scheme.

# Diary

## WWT Safety and Health Awareness Days

20/5/04 North Lanarkshire (Airdrie FC)  
25/5/04 Bristol (BAWA)  
15/6/04 - 16/6/04 Glasgow (Hampden Park)  
15/6/04 Paddock Wood, Kent  
6/7/04 Cardiff (Glamorgan Cricket Club)  
8/7/04 East Anglia (Newmarket Racecourse)  
20/7/04 Cheltenham (Racecourse)  
5/10/04 Trowbridge (Civic Hall)  
18/10/04 Haydock (Racecourse)  
19/11/04 Carlisle (Racecourse)

## WWT Designer Awareness Days

30/6/04 Wakefield (Bretton Hall Campus)



A scaffolding demonstration at the Edgbaston event

For more information call Tim Shambrook  
Tel: 01782 602353 E-mail: [tim.shambrook@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tim.shambrook@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

## WWT Roadshow August-October 2004

Visiting sites throughout the country. If you have a site with more than 250 workers and are interested in a visit from the WWT Roadshow please contact Matt Pickup at Octagon on 020 7862 0116.



The WWT Roadshow will be touring sites throughout the country from August to October 2004

## WWT 4C awards

Entries for the WWT Awards will be open during the summer. If you would like to enter please contact Octagon on 020 7862 0080.

## Others

18/5/04 - 20/5/04

SED, Fen Farm, Milton Keynes. Exhibition with an emphasis on plant and site equipment. HSE will be on Stand 180. For further details see [www.sed.co.uk](http://www.sed.co.uk)

# Workers' safety adviser challenge fund

The government has set up a new Challenge Fund, working with unions and employers, to drive health and safety improvements in small and medium sized businesses.

HSE opened the Workers' Safety Adviser (WSA) Challenge Fund in March 2004. The Fund was set up following a successful six-month pilot, which provided trained voluntary Workers' Safety Advisers in several industries including construction. Their role is to listen to and advise both the workforce and the employer on health and safety matters.

The main purpose of the Fund is to promote partnership between workers and employers to achieve improvements in health and safety. Applicants have submitted bids for funding for a range of projects which will be assessed by the Management Board against a number of criteria including:

- innovation;
- improved worker involvement in health and safety; and
- improved health and safety management.

The first award winners will be announced on 9 June.

## White Van delivers

A pilot White Van Roadshow has proved a real success in delivering health and safety messages to small sites across the country. During March 2004 the Working Well Together (WWT) campaign's White Van Roadshow visited over 60 small construction sites and met nearly 1900 site workers.

The pilot, sponsored by HSE, tested the White Van as a way of communicating key health and safety messages to smaller sites. Feedback from sites showed that workers thought the White Van would have a positive impact on site health and safety.

The main message of the roadshow was that most injuries and ill health in construction can be avoided. The Roadshow featured a video highlighting the High 5 issues; tidy sites and decent welfare, falls from height, manual handling, transport and asbestos. It also featured a hearing loss demonstration and different types of safety harness.

Mick Smith, UCATT Eastern regional health and safety advisor, visited the roadshow in East Anglia and commented: 'The High 5 in video format gave a short, sharp impact and was very welcome'.



The WWT White Van Roadshow visits Stamford Homes in Downham Market

## HOW TO GET SITE SAFE NEWS

SITE SAFE NEWS is sent to you by HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995. If your address details are incorrect or your requirements change please contact HSE Books quoting 'SITE SAFE NEWS'.

## HOW TO ORDER HSE PUBLICATIONS

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books at the above address, online at [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) and from bookshops. Free leaflets can also be downloaded from HSE's website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## HOW TO CONTACT SITE SAFE NEWS

Letters and items of interest for SITE SAFE NEWS should be sent to The Editor, SITE SAFE NEWS, Health & Safety Executive, Room 311, Daniel House, Trinity Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 3TW. Please note we do not carry product information.

Health and safety queries can be answered by HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG Tel: 08701 545500 e-mail: [hseinformationservices@natbrit.com](mailto:hseinformationservices@natbrit.com) HSE website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

