

Construction Industry

Revitalising Health & Safety – The National Targets

20% reduction in rate of work related ill health (10% by 2004)

10% reduction in rate of fatalities and major injuries (5% by 2004)

30% reduction in rate of working days lost (15% by 2004)

'Revitalising Health & Safety' (RHS) - is a 10-year strategy to improve health and safety at work, launched jointly by the Government and Health and Safety Commission on 7 June 2000.

The targets are for the health and safety system as a whole, not just for HSC or HSE. Everyone engaged in work, be they trade associations, employers, trades unions and workers need to think what they can do to deliver them.

Why set specific targets for the construction industry?

More than two million people work in the construction industry. The rate of accidents and ill-health is high, the industry accounts for more than one third of fatal accidents for the whole UK workforce.

During the year 2000/01 there were 105 fatal accidents to construction workers. This was a rate of 5.9 per 100 000 which was six times the average for all industries. The rate for major injuries was 380 per 100 000 and the rate for injuries resulting in absence exceeding three days was 829 per 100 000.

In response to growing concern about the industry's health and safety performance, a major Summit took place in February 2001, called by Government and the Health and Safety Commission (HSC).

Industry leaders through the Strategic Forum (where the main industry representative bodies – for clients, designers, contractors, suppliers, trades unions meet) wanted even more challenging construction Revitalising targets to push for change in the health and safety culture.

These were announced at the Summit and the key industry organisations committed to action plans as a means of delivering them.

"I was at the summit in 2001, and I think there is no doubt that that was a significant occasion, and I think marked a point in our industry where everybody realised that the practices that were going on at that time were just not acceptable."

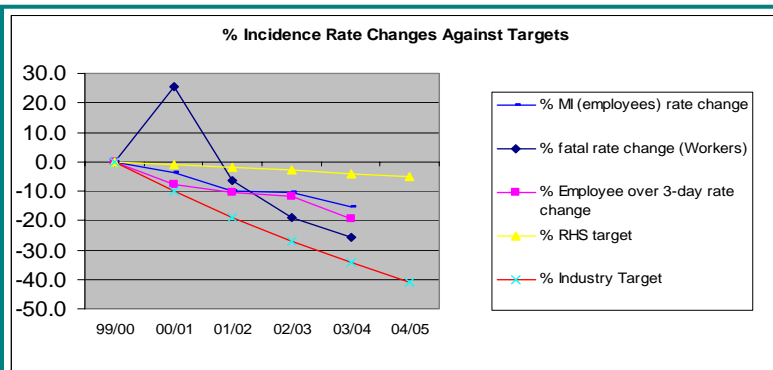
John Spanswick (Construction Confederation, Chair of the Major Contractors Group Health & Safety Working Group) Speaking at the 2005 Summit

Construction Industry Targets

To reduce the incidence rate of:

- Fatalities and major injuries by 40% by 2004/05 and by 66% by 2009/10
- Cases of work-related ill-health by 20% by 2004/05 and by 50% by 2009/10
- To reduce the number of working days lost per 100,000 workers from work-related ill health by 20% by 2004/05 and 50% by 2009/10

	2000/01	2003/04
Fatal Injury Rate per 100 000 workers	5.9	3.6
Major Injury rate per 100 000 workers	380.9	335.1
Over three day absences	829.2	683.6



Progress Against Targets

The table above compares rates between 2000/01 and 2003/04. The fatal injury rate for construction in 2003/04 was 5 times the all industry average compared with 6 times in 2000/01.

Whilst the above Graph details the percentage rate of change to injury incidence rates 1999/00 – 2003/04 (provisional) and shows that the industry is exceeding the all-industry target for improvement in the areas shown it is not yet achieving its own target.

Examples of what the industry has been doing

Since 2001 industry plans have evolved and more industry organisations have joined the process of improvement. One of the most encouraging aspects of progress has been the emergence of a greater number of partnership initiatives between industry stakeholders. Examples of this are:

Competence - The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) administered by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) reports that over 680,000 workers hold the CSCS card and the commitment that Major Contractors Group (MCG) made at the 2001 Summit, endorsed by a major government client, to make CSCS cards a condition of contract for subcontractors has had a significant impact – coverage at MCG sites is around 75% on average - and has led to rationalisation of card issuing bodies and a vast improvement in quality.

Safety in Design (SiD) - a not-for-profit organisation which sets benchmarking standards for designers through the Construction Industry Council, SiD and CIC's project to develop learning aims and standards of competence was funded by Construction Skills and carried out in partnership with industry professionals, academia and enforcers. The SiD website contains these materials plus design guides, and in European Health and Safety Week an e-learning module was launched. The website gets around 1000 hits a month.

Working Well Together Campaign (WWT) - initiated by the Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC) together with HSC in 1999. Sponsored by a number of industry organisations WWT emphasises through a programme of awareness raising events co-operation within the industry in bringing about change. Last year the campaign reached an audience of over 12,000 small and medium sized organisations.

Partnership in Promoting Integrated Supply Chains - In November 2004 the National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC) hosted a joint event with Construction Products Association on integration in practice, specifically dealing with how health and safety aspects of a project had been improved by working as part of an integrated team. In conjunction with other representative organisations within the supply chain, NSCC intends to publish guidance on integration in practice. The National Federation of Builders (NFB) have begun to develop a work programme with the Construction Products Association to design safe and healthy construction materials. FMB is working with CITB Construction Skills in its Supply Chain Readiness Network initiative to ensure that members are ready to take advantage of integrated working opportunities with clients.

Sharing solutions - The Electrical Contractors Association through its Zero Accident Potential initiative agreed targets for accident reduction with its member firms. It found that falls from ladders and stepladders were a major cause, researched the reasons, identified possible remedies and its member firms tried out possible solutions and helped suppliers develop new designs of access equipment suited to working in restricted spaces. ECA developed practical guidance and put it on its website, available freely to all. It collects data on accident numbers and rates and is in line to meet its targets for end 2005. [30% reduction in reportables, 40% in majors]

The Construction Health and Safety Summit 2005 - 'Ownership, Leadership, Partnership' - The second Construction Health and Safety Summit took place with ministerial input from the DTI as well as DWP. The Summit was held to take stock of and celebrate the progress since the industry set its Revitalising Health and Safety targets at the first Summit in 2001. The programme for the event was agreed with an industry steering group encompassing those involved in the original 2001 Summit alongside new partners. The Summit focussed on the themes of 'Ownership, Leadership and Partnership' in achieving further success.

Respect for People Code of Good Practice - The Summit launched the Respect for People Code of Good Working Health and Safety Practices, developed by the Strategic Forum for Construction. It identified behavioural change and worker engagement, occupational health and rehabilitation, design, corporate competence, individual competence, integrated working, verifying performance and sharing best practice as 8 key topics for health and safety improvement.

The Code is designed to identify areas for change and signpost practical advice for tackling the challenges. So far 229 organisations have signed up to the Code of Practice. The Strategic Forum have set up a Health and Safety Group to take forward the actions from the 2005 Summit, monitor progress and report to ministers.

"My union welcomes the respect for people code launched today by the Strategic Forum, and it would emphasise worker engagement as a key to its successful implementation. The reason we place such a high priority on worker engagement, worker consultation, and effective union safety representation, is that these measures are proven to reduce the number of accidents at work."

Alan Ritchie (UCATT General Secretary representing the TUC) speaking at the 2005 Summit