



WOODNIG NEWS

Newsletter of the Woodworking National Interest Group

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WOOD INDUSTRY DEATHS

Four people were killed at work in the woodworking industry during 2000/01. While this figure equals the five-year low of 1999/2000, this is little consolation for the victims and their families. There were two deaths in sawmilling and two in builders' carpentry and joinery. Just as in previous years, the one thing that all the deaths had in common was that they could easily have been prevented.

Table 1 Deaths in the woodworking industry (p=provisional figure)

Status of deceased	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01 p
Employee	5	6	2	4	3
Self-employed	3	1	3	0	1
Total	8	7	5	4	4

In 2000/01 two of the incidents involved the stacking and storage of timber (a collapsed stack of logs and poorly stored panel/timber products falling onto an employee) and two involved transport activities (one a lift truck and one an overturning vehicle).

Of the 28 deaths in woodworking over the last 5 years, 36% were in sawmilling, 25% in the furniture sector, 18% in builders' carpentry and joinery, and 11% in the manufacture of board and panel products. The kinds of incident which caused the 28 deaths included being struck by a moving vehicle (25%), being trapped by something collapsing (eg a timber stack) or overturning (eg a vehicle) (14%), machinery (11%), falls from a height (7%) and being struck by falling or flying objects (eg timber ejected from a machine) (7%).

The industry can and must work together to reduce the number of deaths to zero from now on.

HSC Commissioners visit woodworking factory

Bill Callaghan, Chair of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and Abdul Chowdry, HSC Commissioner, recently visited a Scottish roof truss manufacturing company to see lifting equipment installed to reduce the risk of injury while moving and lifting roof trusses.

They wanted to see how the woodworking industry is devising practical solutions to tackle the incidence of musculoskeletal disorders and how this contributes to HSC's published *Revitalising Health and Safety strategy statement*. One of the main targets of this strategy is to reduce the incidence of work-related ill health by 20% by 2010. Musculoskeletal injuries are the most commonly reported form of industrial ill health.

During the visit, Bill Callaghan said: 'All manual handling tasks have to be assessed under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 to determine the risk of injury. Installation of mechanical lifting equipment such as this virtually eliminates the risk and reduces costly days lost through ill health'.

Roof trusses can weigh more than 150 kg and firms normally rely on team lifting with four or five men to stack them ready for dispatch. HSE ergonomists have concluded that such work presents an unacceptable risk of injury, particularly for trusses weighing more than 95 kg.

We in the WOODNIG believe that mechanical lifting equipment should be adopted by all roof truss manufacturing businesses as a means of complying with their duties under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Inspectors will be checking to see that such systems are in place when heavy trusses are being made.

Guidance on the Regulations is given in *Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Guidance on Regulations L23* ISBN 0 7176 2415 3, price £8.00, available from HSE Books.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNT

A woodworking company in the north-east was recently prosecuted and fined £3500, plus costs of £688, following a serious accident.

A 35-year-old employee was impaled through his groin by a 2 m long splinter ejected from a multi-rip saw. He was feeding wood into the machine when the piece of wood was ejected. The metal anti-kickback fingers which are designed to prevent waste being ejected had not been maintained and were not working properly. The fingers did not fall back into place after the employee had adjusted the front fence.

Following the accident he required emergency surgery, including a ten-pint blood transfusion, and has been unable to work since.

The company was prosecuted under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER98) for failing to maintain the machine. Regulation 5 requires work equipment to be maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

It is important that all parts of woodworking machinery are maintained so that its performance does not deteriorate to the extent that people are put at risk.

Safety-related features of woodworking machinery should be checked regularly to ensure they are working properly. The frequency of the checks depends on the machine and the risks involved. The manufacturer's instructions should also help you decide what needs maintenance and how often it should be done.

Auction sales – A 15-point guide

If you are tempted to bid for a 'bargain' woodworking machine at auction, be careful. What you thought might be a cheap machine could turn out to be very expensive indeed.

You must comply with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER98) before putting the machine into service. You owe it to yourself and your employees to carry out a full assessment before deciding to bid for a machine at auction.

Give the machine the 15-question check:

- 1 Are you sure the machine is complete? How do you know?
- 2 How old is the machine?
- 3 Is the machine CE marked and provided with a declaration of conformity? If not, has the guarding been updated to meet PUWER98?
- 4 Are all the guards and safety devices with the machine and do they meet modern standards?
- 5 Do all accessible moving tools or blades come to rest within 10 seconds (or 30-35 seconds for some types of bandsaw)?
- 6 Will you need to fit braking to the machine to comply with PUWER98? If so, at what cost?
- 7 Will the tooling need replacing to meet PUWER98?
- 8 Are the operating speeds suitable for modern tooling?
- 9 Are additional electrical interlocks necessary for access doors, panels and guards?
- 10 Are the bearings, motors, electrical control equipment and wiring sound?
- 11 Are spare parts readily available?
- 12 Is the machine manufacturer's handbook available?
- 13 When was the machine last serviced?
- 14 Was the machine supplied new or second-hand to the last user? Are you able to contact that user to verify any of the sale details?
- 15 If it was second-hand, was it reconditioned – and by whom?

Don't buy blind or be tempted to buy non-limited cutter projection tooling for use on hand-fed machines.

Consultant prosecuted over hardwood dust levels

An environmental monitoring consultant was recently fined £1000, plus £2000 costs, for causing employees at a Staffordshire sawmill to be exposed to unacceptably high levels of hardwood dust. The sawmilling company had engaged the consultant to carry out dust sampling.

The consultant did not ensure that enough representative samples of employee exposure to hardwood dust were obtained. The resulting report misled the sawmill into believing exposure to wood dust was adequately controlled when it was not.

Regulation 7(1) of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1999 requires exposure to hazardous substances to be either prevented or, if not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. In the case of hardwood dust, this means reducing exposure as far as is reasonably practicable below the maximum exposure limit (5 mg/m³).

The sawmill committed an offence under regulation 7(1) because of the act or default of the consultant, ie the sawmill failed to adequately control wood dust because of advice given to it by the consultant.

In cases such as this, section 36(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 actually makes the consultant liable to prosecution. This is what happened here and the consultant pleaded guilty to the breach of COSHH.

If you use, or are considering using, a health and safety consultant to help you take the measures you need to comply with health and safety legislation, then the free HSE leaflet *Need help on health and safety?* (INDG332) is a good starting place to ensure your money is well spent.

TRAINING AWARD FOR WOOD MACHINING COLLEGES

In June, the Woodworking Machinery Suppliers Association (WMSA) announced the launch of their Cutting Edge Award for Wood Machine Training.

The award of £30 000 is a single prize to be presented to the winning college considered by a panel of judges to have achieved most in terms of success rate and investment in woodworking machine-shop facilities during the year from 1 July 2001.

The aim is to raise the profile of the importance of wood machine training and to encourage investment in training within the industry.

Eighteen colleges have already registered their interest with WMSA.

HSE welcomes this initiative which has been launched at the same time as publication of our research report *Availability, quality and standards of training for woodworking operators and supervisors*. The report shows a grim state of

affairs for health and safety training on machinery across all the woodworking industries, particularly in the furniture and timber sectors.

One of the identified barriers to employers providing adequate training was the availability of suitable training providers and the types of training they offered. This initiative by the WMSA will play a part in resolving this problem.

Full details of the award can be obtained from the WMSA at:

The Counting House, Sir Richard Arkwright's Cromford Mill, Mill Lane, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3RQ
Tel: 01629 826998 Fax: 01629 826997
Website: www.wmsa.org.uk

Contract Research Report CRR339 *Availability, quality and standards of training for woodworking operators and supervisors* ISBN 0 7176 2015 8 is available from HSE Books.

Woodworking and the HSE website

The HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk) contains the majority of HSE's free woodworking publications as well as other woodworking-related information (eg copies of previous editions of **WOODNIG NEWS**, copies of woodworking research reports and details of the HSE inspection programmes for woodworking).

For 2001/02, these inspection programmes include:

- manual handling;
- noise in woodworking;
- training of woodworking machine operatives, supervisors and managers;
- wood dust and asthma.

The web address is:

www.hse.gov.uk/fod/agwood.htm

Add it to your 'favourites' list today!

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What do you think of **WOODNIG NEWS**?
What would you like to see in future editions?
Send your views to Chris Molde at the address below.

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NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM HSE

Details of recently produced HSE publications which may be of interest to the woodworking industry are listed below.

Power tools: How to reduce vibration health risks. Guide for employers INDG338 HSE Books 2001 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2008 5)

Pressure systems: Safety and you INDG261 (rev1) HSE Books 2001 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1562 6)

Occupational exposure limits 2001 EH40/2001 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 1977 X (£5.00)

Woodworking posters Set of six (includes revised planing machine and vertical spindle moulder posters) ISBN 0 7176 2433 1 HSE Books 2001 (£7.50)

Availability, quality and standards of training for woodworking operators and supervisors CRR339 ISBN 0 7176 2015 8 HSE Books 2001 (£20.00)

A guide to the Biocidal Products Regulations for importers and suppliers of biocides HSG208 ISBN 0 7176 1822 6 HSE Books 2001 (£11.00)

A guide to the Biocidal Products Regulations for users of biocidal products HSG215 ISBN 0 7176 1821 8 HSE Books 2001 (£5.00)

All these publications are available from HSE Books.

Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from
HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995.
Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's InfoLine Tel: 08701 545500 Fax: 02920 859260
e-mail: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG. You can also visit HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk

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