

SITE SAFE NEWS

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FIT OUT Campaign

New Chief Inspector of Construction



HSE has appointed Stephen Williams as Chief Inspector of Construction.

Mr Williams said: 'I am delighted to be taking on this position at such a challenging time for the industry. The world will be focusing on our safety record during the construction of the 2012 Olympic sites and the revised Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations will mean new ways of working.'

'My aim is to see an industry that gets health and safety right first time, right from the start, and with the right people involved. It is only by the industry showing leadership, working in partnership and taking ownership of the management of risk that improvements will be made.'

During October 2005, HSE Construction Division inspectors carried out a targeted national inspection campaign looking at the issues of low falls and good order at construction projects approaching completion.

The Fit Out Campaign focused on work at height and slips and trips, with emphasis on the correct selection of access equipment during the later stages or fit out period of building work. Focus was on ladders, towers and good order on site.

Why the late stages of contracts?

Often the earlier good intentions to plan and manage work can be lost in the busy period towards the end of a job, when time is tight and many trades are working in the same areas together. All too often in the rush to complete, sites get cluttered with various bits of kit, materials and waste materials.

We want you to:

- Get it right when working at height.
- Keep your site in good order.

Sounds simple? Yes, it is.

Competent, skilled workers are of great value to themselves, their families, friends and the construction industry.

You must make sure that their safety is always adequately considered.

- When carrying out work at height, make sure that the most appropriate bit of kit is chosen and used by trained workers.
- Stop working from access equipment that is too low for the job or is worn out.
- Make sure that sites are kept tidy so as to reduce the risk from tripping over rubbish, tools and cables.

During 2003/04, over 50% of major injuries to construction workers were caused because they fell or they tripped:

- ▼ 1107 major injuries to workers resulted from falls (28%); and
- ▼ 1073 major injuries inflicted resulted from trips (27%).

If you are a principal contractor:

- You should have a system for the selection and control of contractors that includes arrangements to check their competence.
- You need to be actively monitoring the work of your subcontractors. Are their safety standards the same as yours?

All dutyholders need to:

- Identify jobs that involve work at height and ensure that appropriate precautions are in place.
- Have a risk assessment in place that applies the Work at Height Regulations hierarchy.*
- Have procedures for the selection of correct equipment and ensure that the selected equipment is actually used.
- Communicate risk control measures to the workforce.
- Ensure workers are competent to use the equipment that has been correctly installed/assembled.
- Arrange inspection and maintenance of equipment as appropriate.

Good order on site *Plan how the site will be kept tidy:*

- Traffic routes should be segregated from pedestrian routes.
- When you buy materials, consider what is to be delivered, when, where it is to be stored, alongside waste control.
- Walkways and stairs should be kept free from tripping hazards such as trailing wires and loose materials. This is especially important for emergency routes.
- Work areas should be kept as clear as possible of unnecessary materials, equipment, debris and other hazards.

Good order is an issue all contractors can work together to improve.

*Hierarchy of control measures when working at height:

- 1 Avoid working at height if possible.
- 2 Use an existing safe place of work.
- 3 Provide work equipment to prevent falls.
- 4 Mitigate distance and consequences of a fall.
- 5 Instruction and training and/or other means.

For the above, collective protective measures (such as scaffolding) must be prioritised over personal protection (such as using a fall arrest harness).



TOWER SCAFFOLDS

Are you a painter and decorator?

Working together to address work at height issues with painters and decorators, HSE and Dulux Paints recently held a number of 'Access and Spray Events'. The events were held at Dulux Decorating Centres around the UK, and an HSE representative was on hand to discuss:

- correct planning of work at height;
- performing risk assessment;
- where and how ladders can be used;
- additional safety measures.

A number of leading manufacturers attended, providing demonstrations of the latest equipment, including safe use of ladders, small towers and mobile elevation platforms.

Tower scaffolds are an invaluable piece of work equipment. However, they are often not erected or dismantled safely. HSE has worked with the Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association (PASMA) to develop and promote two distinct methods that allow towers to be erected and dismantled safely.

The first method relies on the use of an advanced guard rail. Erecting towers by this method means that the worker is always protected from a fall.



The 3T method

The second method has been named the 3T or 'Through The Trap' method. This method will greatly reduce the risk of a fall during erection and dismantling.

The information sheet *Tower scaffolds* CIS10 (rev4) can be downloaded from the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis10.pdf. A free video/DVD, *Don't Fall For It!*, which highlights these safe methods of work, is available from PASMA Tel: 0845 230 4041.



The advanced guard rail method

Safe access for electrical maintenance work

the bad



the bad

The missing ladder feet are critical to prevent the ladder from slipping. This ladder is unsafe and should not be used. Always make sure ladders are in good condition.

the good

The equipment shown in the photograph provides a proper stable working platform, so both hands can be used. For fit out work and other activities, this kit has many advantages over working from a stepladder all day.

the good



the ugly



the ugly

Yes, this ladder really was being used. Never use damaged or broken access equipment. When working at height, your life depends on the access equipment working as it has been designed to. Never use faulty broken equipment or equipment that has parts missing.

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

Moving materials

- reduce the strain

Lifting and carrying

Manual handling can cause serious, long-term disabling musculoskeletal injuries. Heavy blocks, kerbs, sills and lintels present a particularly high risk. But the good news is that many manual handling tasks can be eliminated or made easier by good design or mechanisation. Where you have to lift

or carry materials make sure that a manual handling risk assessment is carried out and that you have been trained in safe manual handling techniques.

Here are some examples of simple tools and techniques to help you move materials safely around site:

Reduce bending to materials at ground level



Figure 1 Bending to access mortar and lay bricks at ground level

Laying bricks at ground level can involve bending down to the brick pile and to the wall being built. Bricklayers can spend long periods bending down while also handling bricks and mortar; this combination of awkward postures and handling can contribute to discomfort.

When working at ground level, positioning bricks on system scaffolding reduces the amount of bending required to pick them up.

The first layer of scaffolding is set at 500 mm from the ground.

Materials can be placed on this while the bricklayers stand on the ground. This will reduce the amount of bending required to pick up the bricks. As the wall increases in height, a hop-up can be used to level the work surface with the scaffolding boards.



Figure 2 Brick stacks are placed on the system scaffolding to raise their height and reduce the amount of bending required. The wide trench next to the scaffolding enables materials to be delivered onto the scaffold

Sack trucks

When a wheelbarrow is used to move materials (such as blocks, bricks, slates etc), it tends to be filled to capacity so it is heavy to move. Also, the position of the handles and wheel means that much of the load is taken in the arms, which could contribute to discomfort.

Using sack trucks instead of wheelbarrows can reduce the loading on the user's body:

- ▼ the number of blocks that can be moved on the sack truck is limited to five, meaning the potential loading on the body is reduced; and
- ▼ the position of the wheels on the sack truck means most of the load is taken through the wheels rather than being lifted by the arms.



Figure 4 A sack truck being used for moving slates

Brick tongs

Brick tongs allow rows of stacked bricks (adjustable up to eight bricks wide) to be picked up easily. Good hand and arm posture can be adopted and no force is required.

Labourers will usually carry one set of brick tongs in each hand to have the load evenly divided. Different types of tongs are available.



Figure 5 The pincer grip action uses gravity to press the outer bricks together, with no manual force required

Top tips

- ▼ Use safe lifting points for lintels and sills wherever possible. Identify the weight of all items to be manually handled, using lighter components wherever you can.
- ▼ Use mechanical means to deliver materials to the point of use.
- ▼ Organise scaffolding to make block laying easier, eg by providing tables or half lifts to minimise bending and twisting.
- ▼ Use mechanical placement aids, eg vacuum lifts for kerbs and slabs.

Manual pallet trucks

Materials are typically delivered to site on pallets. Powered fork-lift trucks or telehandlers can be used to move the pallets, but it is not always possible to use a powered truck due to limited space/access, uneven floors, floor loadings etc.

Items may then have to be manually moved from the pallet (which poses risk of discomfort), or a manual pallet truck can be used. However, this type of truck may be difficult to move where the floor surface is uneven; more physical effort is required to move the truck, which could lead to injury.

A pallet trolley with pneumatic tyres is an alternative to the manual pallet truck. The tyres allow the trolley to be moved over uneven surfaces more easily. The large wheel size also makes pushing/pulling easier.



Figure 3 A pneumatic-tyre manual pallet trolley

Moving occupational health forward

The construction industry is committed to improving occupational health but is not sure about how to do it. HSE's Construction Sector is developing a tool for construction companies to help them to manage occupational health risks.

The web-based tool will give information about:

- ▼ risks - like musculoskeletal disorders (eg bad backs), hand-arm vibration (due to vibrating tools) and dermatitis (due to cement and other harmful substances);
- ▼ controls - like ways of avoiding manual handling, use of low-vibration tools and advice on specialist support.

HSE is looking for volunteers, particularly small companies, to try out an early version of the tool. If your firm might be interested in taking part in the pilot, or if you would like to find out more, please contact: Kate Goodwin-Foster Tel: 01582 444217 e-mail: kate.goodwin@hse.gsi.gov.uk, or visit the website at: www.bomelconsult.com/HSE/OHMM.htm.

Diary 2005/06

Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)

09/11/05 Edinburgh High 5 (Royal Highland Showground)
contact *Ritchie McCrae* Tel: 0131 247 2111

10/11/05 Middlesbrough Work at height (Marton Hotel and Country Club, Marton, Middlesbrough) contact *Debbie Flynn* Tel: 0191 202 6209

08/02/06 York Housebuilders (Askham Bryan College, York)
contact *Barrie Ellis* Tel: 0113 283 4260

15/03/06 Aberdeen High 5 (Gordon Barracks, Aberdeen)
contact *Ritchie McCrae* Tel: 0131 247 2111

TBC/03/06 Worcestershire High 5 (venue TBC)
contact *Wayne Owen* Tel: 01782 602319



A range of equipment was on display at the Bathside roadshow

Designer Awareness Days (DADs)

TBC/02/06 Cumbria (venue TBC) contact *Lynn Morgan*
Tel: 01772 836265

TBC/03/06 London (venue TBC) contact *Andrew Lambert*
Tel: 01342 334293



HSC Commissioner Danny Carrigan discusses the Working Well Together display

Mock trials

01/02/06 Harlow (Harlow Civic Centre, The Water Gardens)
contact *Gary Brookes* Tel: 01245 706216

02/02/06 Ipswich (Jacksions, Sandyhill Lane)
contact *Gary Brookes* Tel: 01245 706216



Getting the message - it's all about communication

WORKING WELL TOGETHER



(WWT) Roadshow and White Van tours Autumn 2005

This year's WWT Roadshow and White Van tours visited both large and small construction sites across England, Scotland and Wales throughout September and October. Visitors received free health and safety information, and were able to enter a free health and safety competition with a prize donated by HSS.

The Roadshow took key health and safety messages directly to site workers at their place of work, highlighting areas of greatest risk to health and safety on site, and how to stay safe and healthy. It also aimed to promote cultural change – encouraging everyone to work together to bring about improvements.

Since the summer of 1999, more than 25 000 workers have visited the Roadshow and White Van. This year's tour aimed to reach at least 6000 workers and their site managers.

Building on the success of previous tours, the 2005 Roadshow included interactive demonstrations featuring safety harnesses, safe lifting techniques, transport aids and hearing loss, as well as walk-through displays featuring 'High 5 – Five ways to reduce risk on site'.

Worker engagement

A key theme for this year's tour was worker engagement – when every worker participates in improving health and safety on site, is involved in looking after their own health and safety, and keen to share their experience and knowledge with their employers and contractors.



Cheers!

When workers themselves identify health and safety problems before they cause harm, everybody on site benefits from the improved working conditions.

The best clients, contractors and professionals in the industry are demonstrating that where these principles are adopted on site, the incident rates for accidents, ill health and near misses fall dramatically.

Workers:

- Construction is a dangerous industry – stay safe and stay healthy on site.
- Don't become another statistic.
- Get involved – if you see something is wrong, report it. Be prepared to do things differently to make things better.

Managers:

- The Roadshow and White Van Tours can raise awareness of key areas of concern, including: working safely at height, site transport issues, asbestos, slips and trips, manual handling, hand-arm vibration and hearing loss.
- Be proactive – involve your workforce in improving health and safety on site.

Workers and managers who didn't get a visit can still obtain copies of the free leaflets *The high 5: Five ways to reduce risk on site* INDG384, and *The absolutely essential health and safety toolkit for the smaller construction contractor* INDG344 (single copy free or priced packs of 5), by calling HSE Books on 01787 881165.

Visit the Working Well Together website at: www.wwt.uk.com.

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