

HSE CONSTRUCTION DIVISION

FEBRUARY 2008 FALLS AND TRIPS INSPECTION INITIATIVE

HEADLINE RESULTS PRESENTED TO CONIAC AT ITS MEETING ON 4 MARCH 2008

Introduction

Throughout February 2008 inspectors from HSE's Construction Division took part in an inspection initiative in England, Scotland and Wales, with the continued goal of sending a strong message to the construction industry that HSE will not tolerate poor standards. The initiative targeted the refurbishment sector - responsible for disproportionately more accidents than any other sector of construction - and inspectors focused particularly on prevention of falls and site good order.

HSE Press Office, working with the Government News Network, ensured the initiative was widely trailed by maximising national, regional and trade publicity. As a result we are confident that a high percentage of target businesses were aware they might receive a visit.

Results

Overall activity

Activity	Total
Sites inspected	1108
Contractors inspected	1419
Enforcement Notices served	395

Enforcement activity

Work at Height	
Prohibition Notices	208
Improvement Notices	19
All Notices	227
Good order	
Prohibition Notices	17
Improvement Notices	13
All Notices	30
Other	
All Notices	138
Prosecutions under consideration	
Total	13

Discussion

Averaged across all inspections over 1 in 3 sites and over 1 in 4 contractors were considered to be working so far below the acceptable standard that inspectors felt it necessary to serve enforcement notices.

In 13 cases, inspectors believed the situation on site to be so poor that they have commenced investigations with a view to instituting legal proceedings.

208 prohibition notices were served to address inadequate precautions for people working at height - more than half of all the notices served. In addition a further 19 improvement notices were served

30 enforcement notices were served on good order issues.

138 enforcement notices were served on a range of other matters including inadequate fire precautions, failure to manage asbestos effectively, competence and training and use of petrol powered equipment in inadequately ventilated compartments.

Many of the contractors visited were aware that it was going on and had either seen the pre-publicity in the trade press or the Initiative-specific pages on HSE's website.

Given the high levels of enforcement there is little doubt that a significant proportion of those contractors inspected were made directly aware of HSE's commitment to use the enforcement tools at its disposal.

Background

The aims of the initiative were to:

- Achieve an improvement in industry standards
- Increase awareness of HSE's expectations of the industry
- Demonstrate that HSE is prepared to use the enforcement tools at its disposal
- Gain information on good practice

This was a repeat of a similar inspection initiative held in summer 2007 where inspectors found that conditions on nearly one in three sites were putting workers lives at risk

HSE's website was updated to include information on the initiative together with links to specific information on work at height and good order. Results from the summer 2007 initiative were also included. The good order pages include access to a downloadable toolbox talk with a case study video, and the work at height pages include a link to a work at height safely in building maintenance video.