



# WOODNIG NEWS

Newsletter  
of the  
Woodworking  
National Interest Group

Issue 25

April 2003

## MANSLAUGHTER CONVICTIONS FOR TIMBER YARD DEATH

Teglgaard Hardwood (UK) Ltd and its Managing Director, John Horner, were sentenced on 28 February at Hull Crown Court after they pleaded guilty to charges of corporate manslaughter and manslaughter respectively. The company was fined £25 000 and John Horner given a custodial sentence of 15 months, suspended for two years.

The charges followed the investigation of the death of 18-year-old Christopher Longrigg at the company's timber yard at Hessle Dock, Hessle, near Hull on 26 April 2000.

Mr Longrigg was employed as a general labourer. He died when a stack of hardwood timber packs collapsed on top of him.

Humbleside Police and Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) carried out a joint investigation. Neither the company nor its Managing Director were able to demonstrate that even the most basic health and safety precautions had been taken at Hessle Dock. Before Mr Longrigg's death, the company and Mr Horner had not produced a health and safety policy, they had not assessed the risks to which their employees were exposed and they had failed to provide adequate health and safety training for their employees, particularly those driving fork-lift trucks.

Among the factors which contributed to the collapse of the timber were:

- loose banding;
- stacks were built too high;
- the practice of pushing stacks into the stack behind which caused packs with loose banding to be pushed out of shape.

Regular readers will know we have previously highlighted the risks associated with poor stacking as a result of the research carried out by HSE, which underpins the guidance given in Woodworking Information Sheet WIS2(rev) *Safe stacking of sawn timber and board material*.

Safety in the wood yard depends, not only on stacking, but also on layout, traffic routes and lift-truck driver training. Put simply you need:

- safe sites;
- safe vehicles; and
- safe drivers.

Are you sure you are following best practice? Visit your yard and check it out.

### STOP PRESS

We have just received details of another stacking-related fatality. Tragically, a 20-year-old employee of a bedroom furniture company in the north-west of England has died after a stack of chipboard toppled over.

Approximately 30 large sheets of veneered 18 mm chipboard had been stacked on edge next to a panel saw. A sheet towards the back was needed, so several employees pulled two-thirds of the sheets to an upright position to try to remove the one they wanted. The sheets toppled over, trapping the young man against the table of the panel saw.

# Unsecured roof trusses crush child

A Scottish roof truss company based near Falkirk has recently been prosecuted following a serious accident to a four-year-old child. The child, his two-year-old brother and an older boy aged eight were playing on roof trusses in an open yard approximately 60 m from their home. The unsecured trusses fell over, crushing him.

The investigating HSE inspector found that roof trusses were stacked horizontally and unsecured at various points in the yard. The accident happened when one of the children walked along the top of a bundle of eight trusses (weighing over a tonne), causing them to fall forward, landing on top of the four-year-old. As the trusses fell, they missed his head, but a cross member hit and trapped his abdomen. It took five people, including the boy's father, to lift the trusses off. The boy's back, legs, wrist and feet were injured and he was in hospital for two days.

The bundle of trusses that fell was leaning against a row of small trees, forming the boundary between the yard and the pavement of a public road. The trusses were unsecured and stacked near to a housing estate. The inspector found this accident was foreseeable and could have been prevented if a gate or fencing had been erected to stop children playing in the area and the

trusses had been secured. Risks to members of the public must be properly assessed, and control measures have to be put in place. Previous HSE advice to carry out a risk assessment for stacking and storing had been ignored by the company.

Approximately 50% of all stacking accidents investigated by HSE have resulted in the injured person suffering major injuries (eg fractures, dislocations, amputations). Between April 2000 and March 2002 there have been three fatal incidents involving the stacking and storage of timber. Roof trusses are heavy, so when accidents occur they tend to be very serious.

The main legal requirements covering stacking and storage are the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (the HSW Act), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

The company was prosecuted under section 3 of the HSW Act, which places a duty on employers to conduct their undertaking in such a way that people who are not employed by them but who are affected by what they do are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.

## FORK-LIFT DRIVER TRAINING

The front-page article in this edition of *WOODNIG NEWS* has highlighted the importance of ensuring that fork-lift trucks are only driven by trained and authorised operators.

Every year across all industries there are about 8000 lift truck accidents resulting in injury, and on average ten of them are fatal. Looking back through HSE's records of deaths in the woodworking industries, over the last five years approximately 38% have involved some form of rider-operated lift truck or loading shovel. The accidents have either occurred during operation or while the vehicle was undergoing some form of maintenance or repair.

Training is a crucial factor in fork-lift safety. The HSC Approved Code of Practice *Rider-operated lift trucks: Operator training* (L117 ISBN 0 7176 2455 2) advises on the basic training of lift-truck operators so that employers

can meet their legal obligation to provide adequate training under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

The Approved Code of Practice advises that **employers should not allow anyone to operate a lift truck who has not satisfactorily completed basic training and testing. The only exception is for those who are undergoing such training under adequate supervision.** Approved Codes of Practice have special legal status. If you don't follow the Code you could be prosecuted, unless you can prove that you complied with the law in some other way.

Much more guidance on operation and maintenance of lift trucks is given in *Safety in working with lift trucks* (HSG6 ISBN 0 7176 1781 5). This and the Approved Code of Practice on operator training (L117) are available from HSE Books.

# NUISANCE DUST MASKS

As part of HSE's campaign to reduce the incidence of work-related asthma we are emphasising the need to select the correct dust mask. HSE inspectors commonly find workers using the wrong type of mask, providing little or no protection from the risks of breathing in wood dust.

Many of the so-called 'nuisance' or 'comfort' masks that are widely available do not give adequate protection against wood dust and can give the wearer a false sense of security. They are often chosen because of their low price. They often only have a single elastic band to secure them, which will not be adjustable, hampering a good fit, and may not have a metal band to help them fit across the wearer's nose. Also they will not be 'CE' marked. This mark shows that the piece complies with the European Standard for respiratory protection.

For the majority of dust masks used in woodworking, the EU standard is EN 149. Within this standard a respirator will be designated as one of three classes - FFP1, FFP2 or FFP3, with the latter giving the highest degree of protection. Your equipment supplier will be able to give advice on dust mask selection and fitting, but for work activities involving exposure to fine wood dust a mask rated to at least FFP2 should be used.

Correct selection of a dust mask can be confusing due to the number of types on the market. Face masks depend on good

contact between the skin and the mask for their effectiveness, but many are available in one size only and cannot be expected to fit all the working population. You should obtain a selection of different respirators so that they can be chosen to give the best fit for individual wearers. For those who wear glasses or have facial hair, ensuring a good fit can be difficult with a dust-mask style respirator, so you should consider other types such as an air stream helmet.

Some general advice:

- Using a mask (respirator) to protect workers from health effects caused by breathing in wood dust should always be a last resort, when other means of prevention are not practical. This includes using hand tools and sanding.
- Make sure workers are shown how to adjust the mask to ensure a good fit.
- Make sure enough masks are available to allow workers to change them when required.
- Store the masks in a suitable container away from sources of dust.

Further information on the selection of respiratory protection is available at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/woodindx.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/woodindx.htm). Also see *WIS14 Selection of respiratory protective equipment suitable for use with wood dust*.

## PUWER 98 DEADLINES LOOM

The deadline for changing over to limited cutter projection tooling, and for upgrading machines to reduce the risk of injury while they are running down is **5 December** this year. We hope you have made the necessary changes already and are benefiting from a safer workplace.

If you haven't then you only have **seven months** left to plan and action the changes. The deadlines are set out in the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 as applied to woodworking machinery* L114 ISBN 0 7176 1630 4, available from HSE Books.

These deadlines have been public for over five years now and were designed to spread the burden, both financial and otherwise, of the work that needs to be done. In summary the deadlines are:

**Tooling** - If you already have limited cutter projection tooling, then that alone should be used. Otherwise, the changeover should be made as and when replacement tooling is obtained, or by 5 December 2003, whichever is the sooner.

**Braking** - The ACOP lays down a timetable for certain

specified classes of machine. For circular saw benches, dimension saws, powered and hand-fed cross-cut saws, single-end and double-end tenoning machines and combined machines incorporating a circular saw and/or a tenoning attachment, the work must be completed no later than 5 December 2003, ie five years after PUWER 98 came into force.

**Other deadlines** - Braking is also required for other types of machine. These have different deadlines:

- For narrow bandsaws, re-saws, vertical spindle moulding machines (unless fitted with a manual or foot-operated brake), hand-fed routing machines, thicknessing machines, planing/thicknessing machines and surface planing machines, the work must be completed no later than 5 December 2005.
- For any other machine not specified above but for which the risk assessment shows braking to be necessary, the deadline is 5 December 2008.

Guidance is available in Woodworking Information Sheets WIS37 and WIS38, available free from the HSE website or HSE Books.

# Occupational asthma website

Wood dust is known to cause occupational asthma and more information on this is now available on a new HSE website aimed at employers, safety representatives and health professionals. It sets out:

- the main causes of occupational asthma;
- what it is like to get the disease;
- what employers have to do to protect their employees;
- what HSE and stakeholders are doing to tackle the problem.

Visitors to the site: [www.hse.gov.uk/asthma](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asthma) can view video clips, read case studies, download the plan of actions on occupational asthma agreed by HSC's asthma project board and Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances, and access guidance on the main causes of the disease.

The symptoms of occupational asthma include wheezing, coughing or shortness of breath. Once asthma has been induced, further exposure to the substance, even at relatively low levels, may provoke an attack. These symptoms can develop immediately or several hours after exposure.

Exposure to wood dust has to be controlled under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and the supporting Approved Code of Practice. Copies of the COSHH Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L5, ISBN 0 7176 2534 6 are available from HSE Books.

• YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS •

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

• YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS • YOUR VIEWS •

## NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM HSE

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

*Understanding ergonomics at work: Reduce accidents and ill health and increase productivity by fitting the task to the worker* Leaflet INDG90(rev2) HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2599 0)

*General access scaffolds and ladders* Construction Information Sheet CIS49(rev1) HSE Books 2003

*The security of cross-loaded round timber* Research report RR77 HSE Books 2003 ISBN 0 7176 2624 5 Price £25.00

*Aching arms (or RSI) in small businesses: Is ill health due to upper limb disorders a problem in your workplace?* Leaflet INDG171(rev1) HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2600 8)

*The law on VDUs: An easy guide: Making sure your office complies with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002)* HSG90 HSE Books 2003 ISBN 0 7176 2602 4 Price £8.50

*VDU workstation checklist* HSE Books 2003 ISBN 0 7176 2617 2. Available in packs of 5 at £5.00 per pack

## 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](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

(HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 08701 545500 Fax: 02920 859260 e-mail: [hseinformation@natbrit.com](mailto:hseinformation@natbrit.com) or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

**WOODNIG NEWS** is produced by the HSE's Woodworking National Interest Group based at NAC, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LG.