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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

Update on the strategy and workplan for the waste/recycling industry

A Paper by James Barrett and Paul Harvey- Policy Group - Manufacturing Sector:

Name of Board Member lead: Jonathan Rees

Cleared by Jonathan Rees on April 24th

Issue

1. A request from the Commission for a paper outlining the HSE strategy and work plan for tackling the high injury rate in the waste-recycling industry

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. That the Commission note the current work plan for dealing with the high injury rate in the Waste /Recycling Industry. This plan seeks to reduce that rate over ten years by concentrating on those areas that make the largest contribution to accident and ill health numbers, i.e. street collection and processing of waste and recyclables.

Background

4. The waste/ recycling industry is a growth area for employment with pressure from Government for increased recycling, concern about landfill as a means of disposal and European directives aimed at sustainable development. The industry is regulated by a number of different agencies and activities within the scope of the industry fall to both HSE and Local Authorities (LAs) as health and safety regulators. The LAs are also duty holders as waste collectors and providers of amenity sites. The health and safety record of the industry is poor and the activities of the industry impact on the general public as well as the workforce. Fatal injury rates for the past two years have been worse for this industry than any other regulated sector and recently, there has been a worrying increase in fatalities. Accident rates are almost five times the UK industry average. Unchecked, these rates have a negative impact on the PSA targets.

The Strategy

5. The case for concerted action to deal with the performance of this industry was recognised in 2004 and following research by BOMEL, a project was devised to tackle the issues. The project was incorporated into the Injuries Reduction Programme within the FIT3 programme. See annex 1 for project details.

6. The strategy involved four elements all of which are ongoing:-

- i Communications
- ii Stakeholder engagement
- iii Research
- iv Visible regulator activity/enforcement involving field resources

i) The Col were commissioned to produce a Communications Plan designed to select the most effective messages for the industry and advise on the best way of delivering them. One of the key findings was that messages to employees needed to recognise and appeal to the value to society of their work rather than simply call for safer practices.

ii) In line with HSC Strategy, stakeholder engagement has involved HSE in discussions with the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies, DEFRA, the Environment Agency and Local Authorities in seeking an approach which is joined up and takes into account the wider issues of sustainable development. An example of this is the way pressure on Local Authorities to increase recycling has the potential to increase vehicle movements leading to workplace transport risks – additionally, moves to kerbside sorting of waste materials may increase incidence rates of manual handling. The aim is to reduce the level of workplace injuries whilst meeting recycling targets. The Environmental Services Association (ESA), which represents 35,000 workers (20%) in the private sector, has accepted the need for the industry to improve and agreed to implement a targeted initiative which was launched by Judith Hackitt in 2004. ESA have recently announced a seminar for the industry to be held in June and HSE staff will be speaking at the event. A tripartite group, known as the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH), is central to the strategy, in setting standards and spreading best practice. This group has good support from TU members.

iii) As a result of the inter agency work, HSE has commissioned research, jointly with DEFRA, the Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly to provide local authorities with information needed to assist them in selecting the most appropriate waste and recycling systems. The contractor for this work is HSL and this work has now commenced.

iv) The final part of the strategy is a phased programme of visits - an inspector led approach which initially seeks to raise awareness and develop improvement plans and standards - plus a second phase to reinforce messages using enforcement as appropriate.

Consultation

Information paper only. The workplan involves visits to LAs and the Local Authority Forum were consulted on this. They were very enthusiastic about taking part.

Presentation

7. Cleared by Communications Directorate.

Costs and Benefits

8. n/a

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

9. The project has incurred communication costs, research costs and staff costs and these are set out as follows: -

2005-6 Research to explore attitudes and communications among hard to reach audiences in the sector underpinned the development of a Communications strategy (at a total cost of £55 K). The three pilot campaigns and associated evaluation pre and post campaign cost around £70 K. Future funding (i.e. for a wider rollout) will depend on evaluation results – due shortly- and the size of the overall communications budget available later in the year. No funds have yet been committed for 2006-7.

2006-7 The HSL research spend is approximately £132,000 (HSE contribution). This work was initiated in January 2006 and is due to report in November 2006.

HSE resource dedicated to this sector is assessed as 2 staff years Manufacturing sector (approx £133,000) and 7 staff years Field Operations (approx £430,000).

Other Implications

10. The strategy is aimed at areas where the bulk of injuries occur, i.e. collection of wastes and recyclates. It is not aimed at smaller sub-sectors such as metal recovery - commonly referred to as scrap yards where 6 of the sector deaths have occurred. This sub-sector includes a number of small businesses in poor premises with few employees. A Press Release was issued on 1ST March 2006 to highlight concern and a meeting arranged with the British Recovered Metal Association (BRMA) to consider further action. The current strategy for such premises is to visit reactively e.g. complaint or incident led.

Action / Next Steps

11. There are indications that the increase in accident rates within the sector up to 2004 has been reversed – based on industry figures. There is also evidence of a desire at a senior level within the industry to improve health and safety as part of a general upgrading of management performance in a sector where public and political interest is high. The Manufacturing sector would be pleased to provide further details on progress if required.

Contact

12. James Barrett 0115 9712852 Fax 0115 9712802 (james.barrett@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

Annex 1 Strategy for the Waste and Recycling Industry

	BOMEL Data (2001/2)
No's employed in sector (excl contractors)	165,000
RIDDOR accidents (2002/3)	4,000
Incident Rate per 100,000 employees	2400/ 100,000
Manufacturing sector average	1130 RIDDORS/ 100,000 employees
All industries average	615 RIDDORS/ 100,000 employees
Accidents/ yr saved if 30% reduction	1200 accidents/ yr
This project seeks to gain a 30% reduction	1200 accidents/ yr

N.B. Waste and recycling industry statistics are spread across several SIC codes and are impossible to isolate using standard COSAS data. BOMEL research has produced more reliable accident data (see Mapping health and safety standards in the UK waste industry, Contract Research Report 240).

Project Outline

The waste and recycling industry has an accident rate 4 times the national average. This project seeks to reduce that over ten years by concentrating on those areas that make the largest contribution to accident and ill health numbers, i.e. street collection and processing of waste and recyclables.

Targets

The waste and recycling industry is evolving, developing and growing very quickly at present in response to the need to reduce UK reliance on landfill. Given the level of change in the industry the initial target is to stabilise performance and to deliver reduction in the medium to long term. Therefore;

Target 2007/8: Zero increase in accident rates.
Target 2010: 30% reduction in accident rates.

It is an industry which is large (at least 165,000 employees), and is rapidly expanding. Additionally the processes involved in the industry are found in all undertakings from supermarkets to factories and from offices to landfill sites.

Industry and Accident Segmentation

Analysis of the industry and its health and safety performance has been able to identify the following safety related issues as priorities. It is these areas that the project will address.

- Street collection of waste accounts for over 85% of employment in the industry.

- Processing of waste to achieve national recycling targets is a growing industry. Processing occurs both at the street and within fixed premises.
- Over 90% of accidents occur in the collection and processing of waste/ recyclables.
- Of those accidents
 - 33% are musculo-skeletal injuries
 - 30% are slips, trips and fall injuries
 - 8% are injuries caused by handling sharp objects
 - 4% are struck by vehicle injuries (most of these being major injuries)

Project Definition

The strategy is defined as having three elements: -

- Influencing policy makers (e.g. OGD's)
- Influencing operational decision makers (LA's as clients and private sector as contractors) and
- Bring about change in the actions of risk takers (employers)

Project Objectives

These objectives will be delivered through 21 specific tasks and a communications strategy.

The project will direct its efforts towards those of highest employment and highest accident numbers, i.e. most resource will be directed towards improving street collection and processing performance.

Waste and recycling activities are found throughout UK industry. Therefore, this project will seek to exploit links with other industries where necessary.

Scope

The proposed projects cover those areas that contribute significantly to the accident numbers of the industry, those considered to be areas of growth, and those areas thought to generate significant and unique health issues. Consequently, there are several areas of the industry that do not feature in the plan, or that feature for a defined period only.

The key areas are:

- Collection of waste and recyclables (major element)
- Processing of waste and recyclables (major element)
- Handling and processing of organic wastes (minor element)
- Recovery of hazardous materials from end of life vehicles (minor element).

Key stakeholders within the strategy are: -

- Other government departments (Defra, SE, WAG, Env Agency)
- Local authorities as clients
- Intermediaries (trade bodies, professional organisations etc)
- Private sector employers
- Employee representatives
- Community sector organisations
- Waste and recycling interest groups

Partnership Working

Delivering the many elements of the project will require joint working with industry and the policy makers. The Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum will be fully involved in the project and have “ownership” of many of the agreed standards and outputs of the project.

Links to other Strategic Programmes

The strategy for the waste and recycling sector includes projects that cover and build upon the following, existing programmes: -

- MSD programme
- Workplace transport programme
- Slips and trips programme
- Falls from height programme
- Public services programme
- Disease reduction programme

Staff Resource Requirements

- 2005/6 the strategy utilised approximately 2 staff years of B2/3 resource in the Manufacturing Sector and 6 staff years of B3 FOD resource.
- 2006/7 the strategy will use 2 staff years of B2/3 time from the Manufacturing Sector and 7 staff years of FOD B3 resource.

Research Resource

Research is required to monitor the performance of the industry against the benchmark figure of 2001/2 reported by the BOMEL research. It is intended that this work is carried out in Summer 2006 using provisional data from 2005/6.

This work will inform the Manufacturing Sector of the effectiveness of the strategy and areas where more/less work is required. Authorisation for this research is required.

Communications

The success of almost all elements of the strategy is dependant on the quality and effectiveness of communications. Therefore, resource required for each element includes that needed to ensure that outcomes (accident reduction) have the best chance of success.

Communications will operate on three separate levels, often linked:

1. Routine reactive and proactive communications. This will cover use of the HSE waste webpages, trade press, press office and other medium to communicate with the industry on routine issues outside of the specific tasks. Examples may include press releases and articles in reaction to fatalities, website articles in response to frequently asked questions etc.
2. Communications to support the implementation and adoption of outputs of the strategy. Each of the tasks will have its own communications plan to ensure that the outputs stand the greatest opportunity of being adopted. This may include planned press releases, seminars, exhibitions, and interviews with trade press etc.
3. Campaigns. The Communications Directorate in association with COI and the Manufacturing Sector ran a pilot campaign aimed at waste/ recycling collection

staff. The pilot was designed to find effect medium for influencing the behaviour of this hard to reach group.

Medium used for communications includes:

- Website operation
- Editorial, design and publication of products on the website (this will include resources aimed directly at the shop floor such as Tool Box Talks etc).
- Articles within the trade media
- Response to incidents and events via the media
- Promotion campaigns
- Trade exhibition stand
- Seminars/ presentations
- Internal communications
- Consideration of the needs of non-English speakers/ hard to reach groups.

Business Case

The total resource required to deliver the strategy in 2006/7 will be 9 staff years, working towards a reduction in accident numbers of 30% (i.e. 1200 accidents/yr) by 2010.

Risks

The waste and recycling industry is in the process of undergoing massive change in response to Government targets to reduce landfill use and increase recycling. This period of evolution and development of the industry presents an opportunity to positively affect a poorly performing sector. Employment in parts of the industry is already known to have increased substantially. If HSE does not engage effectively it is likely that existing and new workers will be exposed to the same high risks of injury and ill health resulting in an increased number of injury and ill health.

The strategy concentrates resource on specific areas of the waste/ recycling industry. There is a risk that other areas suffer from lack of attention. However, we are confident that the effect of the strategy will percolate to other processes covered by organisations involved in collection of waste and recyclables. The exception to this is the scrap industry.

Monitoring

Progress with the strategy will be monitored by: -

- Comparison of performance against research carried out in 2004 (see research bid).
- RIDDOR accident rates.
- Delivery of individual projects.
- Feedback from WISH and the industry.

Each of the tasks within the strategy will produce its own timetable against which progress will be monitored.

Tasks within the Waste/ Recycling Strategy

Task 1: MUSCULO SKELETAL INJURY IN THE COLLECTION OF WASTE/ RECYCLABLES

Aim: Commission research to enable local authorities to identify the most appropriate collection, transfer, treatment and processing systems of household waste/ recyclables.

Timescales: January 2006 – January 2007

Task 2: INFLUENCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aim: To positively influence the design and management of waste and recycling services controlled by local authorities.

Timescales: February 2005 – Project End

Task 3: BIN LIFTS

Aim: To reduce the amount of accidents caused by wheelie bins and bin lift mechanisms at the side/ rear of refuse collection vehicles.

Timescales: February 2005 – June 2006

Task 4: ERGONOMICS AND SAFETY OF COLLECTION RECEPTACLES AND COLLECTION VEHICLES

Aim: To reduce the risk of musculo-skeletal injury by promoting the principles of effective ergonomic design of waste/ recycling vehicles and the collection receptacles used by operatives and members of the public.

Timescales: April 2006 – March 2007

Task 5: CONVEYORS

Aim: To reduce the risk of work related upper limb disorders when working at recycling sorting stations.

Timescales: February 2005 – November 2005

Complete - Generic web document produced by HSL following wide consultation and placed on website <http://hse.gov.uk/waste/conveyorbelt.pdf>. Marketing and evaluation are ongoing.

Task 6: SLIPS AND TRIPS

Aim: To reduce the incidence of slip and trip injuries within the waste and recycling industry, particularly those associated with the collection and sorting of household waste.

Timescales: April 2006 – October 2007

Within communications campaign

Task 7: WORKING AT HEIGHT, VEHICLE DESIGN AND SHEETING OF LOADS

Aim: To reduce the incidence of falls from height injuries in the waste and recycling industry, particularly those associated with sheeting of loads, maintaining vehicle-mounted equipment at height and access and egress to cabs and working platforms.

Timescales: Feb 2006 – November 2006

Task 8: PEDESTRIAN WORKING IN A VEHICLE ENVIRONMENT

Aim: To reduce the incidence of pedestrians being struck by vehicles.

Timescales: February 2006 – November 2006

Task 9: DRIVER COMPETENCE

Aim: To ensure drivers within the waste/ recycling industry are competent to operate within the environment and hazards specific to the industry.

Timescales: April 2005 – December 2006

Task 10: SAFETY OF SITES ENFORCED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aim: To draft and promote standards for the safe provision of waste/ recycling services found in retail, wholesale, entertainment and office premises enforced by environmental health officers.

Timescales: February 2005 – May 2006

Task 11: SHARP INJURIES

Aim: To draft and promote standards that will reduce the risk of sharps injuries in the waste and recycling industry.

Timescales: January 2007 – May 2008

Task 12: BIO-AEROSOLS AND BIO-HAZARDS

Aim: To draft and promote standards that will control the risk of occupational ill health generated by exposure to bio-aerosols and bio-hazards.

Timescales: April 2006 – March 2008

Complete

Task 13: DEFRA AND DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT

Aim: To positively influence the policy making and strategy of DEFRA and the devolved assemblies to promote environmental legislation and policies that ensure the health and safety of those who work in the industry.

Timescales: February 2005 – Project end

Task 14: OPERATIONAL PROJECT: FOD INTERVENTION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aim: To co-ordinate and maximize the benefits of the operational project delivered by FOD to improve the health and safety standards within waste management contracts.

Timescales: February 2005 – March 2007

Task 15: OPERATIONAL PROJECT: FOD INTERVENTION WITH LARGE COMPANIES

Aim: To co-ordinate and maximize the benefits of the operational project delivered by FOD to improve the health and safety standards within large waste management companies.

Timescales: February 2005 – Project end

Task 16: VOLUNTARY/ COMMUNITY RECYCLING SECTOR

Aim: To ensure that health and safety is effectively practiced within the community sector.

Timescales: February 2005 – April 2008

Task 17: CONTRACTOR SELECTION, EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES AND THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED

Aim: To draft and promote guidance and standards to clarify employers duties when engaging contractors, hiring workers via employment agencies and hiring workers with poor communication skills.

Timescales: June 2005 – September 2007

Task 18: STAKEHOLDERS

Aim: To efficiently and effectively work with stakeholders involved in the waste and recycling industry to improve the health and safety performance of the industry.

Timescales: February 2005 – Project end

Task 19: COMPETENCE

Aim: To promote and support the preparation and implementation of competence standards within the waste/ recycling industry to equip workers with competence in health and safety.

Timescales: February 2005 – May 2008

Task 21: END OF LIFE VEHICLES

Aim: To conclude the Manufacturing Sectors involvement in process of identifying and promoting safe systems of work in this new industry.

Timescales: February 2005 – July 2005

Complete – Guidance produced and launched on the safe recovery of petrol from vehicles- available at <http://hse.gov.uk/publs/web/recyclingpetrol.pdf>.

Document1