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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

Update on the progress of the Construction Programme

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Issue

1. To inform the Commission of progress with the Construction Programme.

Timing

2. Routine

Recommendation

3. The Commission are asked to note the progress in meeting the programme's objectives.

Background

Short History

4. Around 2.2 million people work in Britain's construction industry and it accounts for almost 10% of GDP. The growth that the industry has seen over recent years is set to continue with major infrastructure development, the energy programme and the London Olympics. The industry faces a considerable challenge in tackling health and safety. Around one third of all workplace fatalities (71 deaths in 2004/05) occur in construction and 15% of major injuries despite employing 10% of the working population.

5. The Construction Programme, developed in response to the Revitalising Agenda, is entering its fifth year. The Programme is delivered almost entirely by the Construction Division, within Field Operations Division. The Programme's current target is to deliver a 5% reduction in the industry's fatal and major injury rate by 2007/08 within the injuries reduction target of Fit3.

The programme has achieved significant outcomes since 2000.

Revitalising targets are being exceeded:

- the fatal accident rate for workers has fallen by over 27%;
- the major injury rate for employees has fallen by over 24%;
- the over 3 day rate for employees has fallen by over 34% .

6. The Programme takes advantage of the Division's ability to influence all the industry's stakeholders in a coordinated and integrated way. The programme is designed to deliver a cultural change in the industry over a ten-year period in order to deliver the Commission strategy in the construction sector. The programme also contributes to **ill health** and **days lost** targets. Accordingly we work closely with the Fit3 component programmes to deliver their key messages in a construction context.

7. The **key objectives** of the programme are:

- secure ownership by the industry of the health and safety challenge;
- engage key intermediaries;
- develop partnerships between those who create, manage and are exposed to risk;
- deliver an effective intervention strategy;
- develop and implement a strategy that will help SMEs and micro-businesses to make a step-change in their health and safety performance;
- where necessary revise the regulatory framework.

Current Situation

8. The reductions in accident rates reflect significant changes in the industry including:

- following the 2005 Ministerial Summit the industry has taken ownership of driving forward high level change through its Strategic Forum;
- exemplifying industry ownership the Strategic Forum now reports progress to ministers;
- the Institutes of Structural and Civil Engineers have announced that health and safety must form part of continuing professional development for members;
- a number of high risk trades have changed their practices such as structural steelwork where fatalities are now a rarity.

9. We have achieved these outcomes by developing and embedding new ways of working including:

- forming project teams drawing on all disciplines of staff in the division;
- creating a nationally coordinated programme working with large organisations
- planning early interventions with major projects to ensure health and safety risks are properly considered before work starts on site
- delivering targeted, well managed campaigns accompanied by effective publicity e.g Fit Out and Good Order
- developing partnership working with key stakeholders to maximise impact for HSE input e.g.the Working Well Together Campaign reached over 10 000 people from Small, medium sized and micro organisations.

10. This integrated approach has meant that the balance of our interventions has shifted to elimination and control of risk earlier in the construction supply chain. The accident reduction is mirrored by the improved site conditions our Inspectors are finding. Consequently there has been some reduction in enforcement action, convictions secured in construction in 2004/05(p) fell by around 5% from 2003/04 although construction now accounts for 40% of all HSE's prosecutions.

Next Steps

11. The Programme has had success, fatality and injury rates are the lowest on record, but there are further challenges ahead if we are to realise a cultural change and drive down accidents and ill health further. The industry's own targets, which are very demanding are not yet being met and the 2004/05 accident statistics set the baseline for the PSA target for 2005/08. Some of the challenges we foresee in meeting the target are;

- how to influence SME's even more effectively as they form the vast bulk of construction companies accounting for a disproportionate number of accidents.
- achieving the same impact on occupational health statistics as we have with accidents,
- maintaining the progress we have made, particularly in light of the predicted growth of the industry including the Olympics,
- achieving maximum impact from our 50 staff years of reactive work which delivers significant change across a range of organisations in the supply chain.
- improving our understanding of the influence of enforcement e.g. publicity from prosecutions

12. We plan to meet these challenges by building on the successes of recent years. Some examples of how we intend achieve further impact are:

- using the CDM regulations and their implementation as an opportunity to make a step change;
- promoting best practice in public sector procurement through a high level conference at the end of March;
- building on the success of previous ministerial summits by driving forward the same messages in all parts of the UK e.g. Welsh Summit, Scottish Construction Forum;
- a range of occupational health initiatives including
 - an Industry Conference in May,
 - Occupational Health Model on web early 2007
 - Six supply chain projects engaging the whole industry in practical solutions to significant health problems
 - Backs! – CD matching last year's delivery in October 2006
- Targeted campaigns including Falls in May.