

Open Government status: Fully Open

Paper Number: M1/2008/1

Exempt material: Note

Meeting Date: 4 March 2008

Type of Paper: Below the line

Paper File Reference:

Intranet embargo: None

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONIAC)

Construction Occupational Health Management Essentials (COHME)

A paper by CONIAC's Secretariat

Cleared by Louise Brearey (Head of Construction Sector)

Summary

This paper is for information only

This paper briefs on the development and purpose of COHME, and supports a demonstration of COHME that will be given to CONIAC on 4 March 2008.

Issue

1. Construction Occupational Health Management Essentials (COHME) web guidance.

Timing

2. Routine - COHME was launched on 4 February 2008.

Background

3. Estimates from the 2006/2007 Self-reported Work-related Ill health survey (SWI) suggest that the overall prevalence of ill health in construction is 3 900 per 100 000 workers. Data from the SWI and the Labour Force Survey suggest total time lost due to construction work-related ill health per annum in 2006/2007 was 1.8 million days (about 0.84 days per worker).

4. HSE has developed COHME as free web-based guidance (aimed principally at employers/supervisors and technical/specialist staff) to assist the construction industry in the management of occupational health risks. It is hoped that COHME will support the major cultural changes that are needed in the industry if significant reductions in occupational ill health are to occur.

Argument

5. COHME is solely an Internet-based product. It provides advice for each of the key construction dutyholders on how to manage health as well as detailed information (guidance, practical case studies etc) for specific risks – HAVs, MSDs, dermatitis, noise, stress, respiratory disease and asbestos. It includes links to other parts of the HSE website and other useful sources of information.
6. COHME was developed by Construction Division in consultation with other HSE programmes (eg Noise and HAV Programme and Disease Reduction Programme) and relevant specialists (eg occupational health inspectors and legal advisers), drawing on existing published material where appropriate in response to industry's recognised need. Its content was reviewed by key industry stakeholders on CONIAC's Occupational Health Working Group and a separate industry focus group.
7. The target audience for this phase of the development of COHME includes: large construction clients, contractors and professionals. Further development work is likely to address SMEs and information for workers.

Presentation

8. A press launch was held on 4 February to raise awareness of COHME by construction, health and safety, and occupational health journalists. Stakeholders and dutyholders will also be alerted via prominent notices on the HSE Construction web front page and HSE's construction e-bulletin, as well as by information provided, where necessary, by HSE operational and visiting staff.

Contact

Sue Parkyn, Chair of CONIAC Occupational Health Working Party, Tel: 01582 444306, e-mail: sue.parkyn@hse.gsi.gov.uk