



DON'T FALL FOR IT!



Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors will take part in the first ever European inspection programme, this summer. Two inspection campaigns, in June and September, will focus on falls from height and will be supported by widespread publicity.

HSE inspectors will be looking closely at how work at height is managed including:

- risk reduction and good design;
- selection of competent contractors;
- using the safest and most appropriate access equipment for the job;
- training and competence; and
- maintenance of equipment.

Kevin Myers, HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction

The campaign will also look at the impact of the EC Directive on temporary and mobile worksites, which led to the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations (1994) in the UK. Inspectors will be checking that sites have been notified to HSE, that a health and safety coordinator has been appointed, that a health and safety plan has been produced and that information is being collected to form the health and safety file.

Kevin Myers, HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction, said: 'It is often claimed that the UK construction industry has some of the highest health and safety standards in Europe. This campaign will give UK companies a chance to prove this to the rest of Europe.'

Health and Safety in Construction ISBN 0 7176 2106 5, £9.95 and **Health and Safety in Roofwork** ISBN 0 7176 1425 5, £8.50 are available from HSE Books. See back page for details of how to order.

£320 000 FINE FOR SCAFFOLDING COLLAPSE

Two building companies were fined a total of £320 000 after 12 storeys of scaffolding partially collapsed onto a road and railway in Cardiff. Miraculously, nobody was hurt as the incident occurred late at night. The collapse, which happened in December 2000, caused major disruption as the road and railway were closed for five days.

An HSE investigation identified a catalogue of errors, which contributed to the collapse:

- The scaffold design was defective in certain areas. In particular, the design drawing for the scaffolders did not provide adequate information on the number, location and make-up of the ties.
- A decision was taken at site level by the contracts manager and scaffolder to change the design, without checking with the designer. This was because the design drawing supplied was poorly prepared and ambiguous.
- Ninety-one anchor ties were installed, rather than the required 300. There were no drilled fixings in the topmost 6 m of the scaffolding.
- Each tie consisted of two ringbolts with drilled anchors. The ties were defectively installed, as the

scaffolders were not trained in the proper fixing of the anchors and associated ringbolts. As a result the ties failed prematurely in high winds.

- The principal contractor did not carry out checks on either the design of the scaffolding or the adequacy of the installation. A scaffolding register was not completed, nor was there a system for carrying out weekly inspections of the scaffolding. The number of ties installed was not checked at hand-over, nor had any been tested.

Andrew Knowles, the HSE inspector who led the investigation, said: 'This is the worst scaffold collapse I have investigated. It is only a matter of good fortune that nobody was injured. Had the incident happened during the daytime, the consequences could have been catastrophic.'

Since the incident the principal contractor has trained over 40 engineers in scaffold inspection and the scaffolding contractor has carried out a company-wide retraining programme.



Miraculously, no one was hurt as the collapse happened late at night

The railway was closed for five days

DAD targets designers

HSE's Construction Division (CD) recently held a 'Designer Awareness Day' (DAD) in Haydock. One hundred and ninety designers and architects were at the event, which was aimed at improving their understanding of their duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM). The DAD also looked at how they can contribute to the Government and industry strategy for revitalising health and safety.

The DAD was an important part of the CD Scotland and the North of England Unit's plan for engaging designers. During February and March CD inspectors visited civil and structural engineering design practices in the North-West. In conjunction with construction specialist inspectors from CD's Technology Unit, they carried out audits of

designers' procedures for designing out health and safety risks in and around their proposed structures.

A further initiative by Scotland and the North construction inspectors will follow on from the DAD. They will visit construction sites to look at how designers are addressing the risks from working at height during construction, and subsequent maintenance, of the building. Inspectors will expect the designers to meet them on-site and explain what they have done to eliminate or minimise these risks. Examples of innovative solutions will be shared with the wider design sector.

Nick O'Connor, Principal Construction Inspector, said: 'Although some designers have invested considerable resources in eliminating and reducing risks through design considerations, many still fail to do so. It is these, who are not complying with their duties under CDM, we will be concentrating on in the coming months.'

Help *from* the industry, for the industry

The Working Well Together (WWT) Campaign has joined together with partners in the construction industry to bring key health and safety messages to self-employed and small contractors.

Despite suffering 75% of all accidents, smaller contractors often miss out on health and safety training and developments. They underestimate the impact that poor health and safety performance can have on their own lives and those who work with them, as well as the financial impact on their business if things go wrong.

Seven free WWT Construction Health and Safety Days have taken place all over the country and more are planned this year. Many thanks to all those companies involved in the events: the Federation of Master Builders, CITB, Bluestone, Allenbuild, YJL, Alfred McAlpine, Bovis, Kier, Speedy, Hilti and many others.

All the events were very well attended. The Edinburgh event had to close the doors when 300 delegates turned up and the car park at the Bristol event was full to the brim with builders' vans!

The events included practical sessions on key health and safety topics, delivered by speakers from major contractors:

- working safely at height;
- manual handling;
- asbestos;
- hand-arm vibration; and
- transport on-site.

Further events are planned in the near future. So if you're self-employed or a small contractor who employs less than 15 people, contact Joy Jones at WWT on 020 7556 2130 or check the WWT website at www.wwt.uk.com. All the events are free.



Demonstrating a safety harness at Beverley



George Wimpey UK use a beanbag fall arrest system

This is a highly visible, easily managed and operated system of fall protection. Above all, it has been an initiative where there has been 100% support from the site management and workforce. It is seen as a step forward in providing a safer working environment, not a hindrance. ”

Edward Woods, Director of Health, Safety and Environment, George Wimpey UK.

An excellent example of managing the risks of falls from height.



Satisfied delegates in Yorkshire (left), and a scaffolding demonstration at Carlisle (right)

LETTERS

Fall protection

“ Dear SSN

At George Wimpey UK we always incorporate health and safety considerations into our new house design process. There are, however, occasions where certain risks cannot be eliminated by design. One such area was the installation of engineered joists and weather decking flooring on mid-floors.

We carried out a review of fall protection procedures and found that while areas such as roofs and stairwells were covered by the use of safety nets and edge protection etc, there was still a risk during the installation of flooring joists and floor covering.

Various measures were trialled, including harnesses and edge protection. Although providing some protection, each had a prohibitive effect in carrying out the task and was not very popular with our operatives.

Extensive trials of a collective fall arrest system using beanbags proved very successful in providing maximum fall protection for the operatives, and were well accepted. Following the trials, we have recently introduced the system on all George Wimpey and Laing Homes sites in the UK.

FOCUS ON

The High 5

Introducing the five high-priority issues for making sites safer and healthier places to be.

Ask SITE SAFE NEWS

Q. What are the High 5 priority areas for site safety?

Answers.

High 1. The Basics: Tidy sites and decent welfare

Tidy sites and decent welfare are the basics of a good site. Slips and trips are the most common cause of injuries at work. Many can be eliminated through good housekeeping and keeping a tidy workplace. An untidy site is a poorly managed site.

All sites need decent welfare facilities - hot running water, soap, towels and a basin where arms can be immersed to the elbows, especially when using cement.

High 2. Falls from height

Falls from height are the biggest cause of fatal and serious injuries on construction sites, accounting for around 50% of all deaths. Many accidents involve falls from roofs, through fragile material, from ladders and from leading edges.

High 3. Manual handling

One of the most common reasons why workers leave construction is because of manual handling injuries caused by working with heavy, awkward materials, often in cold, wet conditions. Injuries are made worse by repetitive jobs such as laying heavy blocks.

High 4. Asbestos

Many non-domestic buildings in the UK contain asbestos. If you're thinking of working on a building that was built or renovated between 1900 and the 1980s, until proved otherwise, you should assume it contains asbestos. The three main materials that may contain asbestos are cement sheets, lagging (on pipes, central heating etc) and insulating board (AIB).

A competent contractor can remove asbestos cement, but work on lagging and AIB can only be done by a contractor holding a licence issued by HSE.

High 5. Transport

Vehicles and pedestrians should be kept apart as much as possible, using barriers and displaying warning signs. Keep good clearance around slewing vehicles. Avoid reversing and use trained banksmen where you cannot. Make sure loads are secured. Don't use plant and vehicles on dangerous slopes. Don't take passengers on vehicles unless designed to carry them. Finally, ensure vehicles are maintained and drivers are trained.

HSE has a range of priced and free publications that deal with all aspects of health and safety in construction including the High 5 topics. See back page for information on how to order them.

INDG284 (Leaflet)	Working on roofs
INDG225 (Leaflet)	Preventing slips, trips and falls at work
INDG143(rev1) (Leaflet)	Getting to grips with manual handling
HSG210 (Guidance booklet)	Asbestos essentials task manual ISBN 0 7176 1887 0 £8.50
CIS46 (Information sheet)	Provision of welfare at transient construction sites
CIS52 (Information sheet)	Construction site transport safety: safe use of impact dumpers

The good, the bad and the ugly

Just like any other workplace, building sites should provide decent welfare facilities. In reality the standard of facilities varies widely, as these examples show.

the good

This site in Solihull had hot running water with soap, towels and large, clean basins as well as dispensers of skin hygiene creams. The toilets were clean, the canteen was immaculate and there was a brush and grid system for cleaning workers' boots.

The inspector who visited the site said: 'I was greatly impressed with the welfare facilities on-site and the attention that had been given to their cleanliness'.



the bad

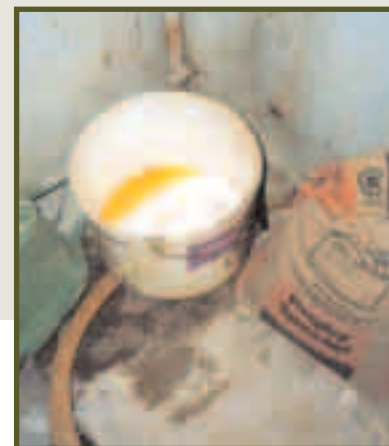
These photos, taken on a different site in Solihull, show a very dirty rest room where workers were expected to shelter and eat. The site agent said that he couldn't get the staff to keep the canteen clean and yet there was no bin provided or a system in place for cleaning.

The HSE inspector, who served an Improvement Notice, commented: 'The site was run in a haphazard way and the morale of the workers was low'.



the ugly

This is a photo of the 'toilet' facilities provided on one particular site. We'd like to say that this photo was taken in a third-world country but, believe it or not, this site was located somewhere in Cornwall! We won't tell you exactly where, as we don't want to embarrass the unfortunate people who were forced to work in this squalor. The inspector served the builder with an Improvement Notice and said: 'The facilities on this site were the worst I've ever seen'.



Permanently injured by fall

In February 2002 a roof worker fell through a fragile roof light at an industrial unit refurbishment in West London. He sustained back and wrist injuries, which would have been much worse had his fall not been cushioned by a pile of insulation below.

Fragile roof lights had been identified as high-risk before the accident and fall prevention measures were highlighted in a risk assessment. Unfortunately, none of these measures were put in place and the site management did not stop the work from proceeding.

The accident happened while a pallet was being lowered onto the roof. The pallet swung sideways, knocking the worker off balance, he stepped backwards onto a roof light, which gave way and he fell inside the unit.

After the accident safety nets were installed under the roof lights before work started again. An access tower and guardrails were also erected around the edge of the roof.

The roofing contractor and the principal contractor were each fined £5000 for failing to ensure the safety of the roof workers.

The investigating inspector said: 'The contractor's own risk assessment acknowledged the risks from working at height. The accident would have been prevented if they had put the findings of this risk assessment into practice. The worker will never be able to use his wrist properly again and could easily have been killed.'



The fall was cushioned by rolls of insulation

Pat on the back for No.1 Worker

Pat Dowling was the winner of the Working Well Together (WWT) No.1 Worker award for 2002. This was in recognition of his excellent work in ensuring the health and safety of his fellow workers at the Bovis site at Paternoster Square, London.

Pat is a Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians rep on the site and was nominated by a number of his workmates. They were truly appreciative of his continued efforts to improve working conditions.

Nominating Pat, a colleague said: 'Pat is always thinking of his fellow workers. Building sites would be a lot safer if there was someone like him on each of them.'

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for a real contribution to health and safety? Nominations for the 2003 WWT awards will open soon. Look out on the WWT website at www.wwt.uk.com for details.



Pat Dowling (right) receiving the WWT No.1 Worker award from John Lacey of award sponsors Lincsafe

Help needed

Researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University are carrying out a project entitled Integration of Health and Safety Planning in Construction. The project will investigate the best ways to effectively integrate health and safety management into project planning, communication and control.

The aim is to build in safety planning and control as a core aspect of normal management, rather than attempting to run separate safety procedures as bolt-on extras. The research aims to deliver best practice through consultation with experienced practitioners.

The research team is led by Dr Iain Cameron, Head of the Division of Construction and Ergonomics at the School of the Built Environment, Glasgow Caledonian University. The team urgently need representatives from all areas of the industry to collaborate on the project and are keen to hear from any interested parties.

Representatives from disciplines including clients, project managers, designers, management contractors, consultants and union representatives are required.

If you would like to contribute to the project please contact Billy Hare on Tel: 0141 331 8036 or e-mail: b.hare@gcal.ac.uk

HOW TO GET SITE SAFE NEWS

SITE SAFE NEWS is sent to you by HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995. If your address details are incorrect or your requirements change please contact HSE Books quoting 'SITE SAFE NEWS'.

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HOW TO CONTACT SITE SAFE NEWS

Letters and items of interest for SITE SAFE NEWS should be sent to The Editor, SITE SAFE NEWS, Health & Safety Executive, Room 308, Daniel House, Trinity Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 3TW. Please note we do not carry product information.

Health and Safety queries can be answered by HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG Tel: 08701 545500 e-mail: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk.

Keep your top on this summer

Everyone looks forward to being in the sunshine, but many people don't realise that they could be exposing themselves to danger. The sun can be a source of skin damage including sunburn, blistering and skin ageing, and in the long term can increase the risk of skin cancer. The problem is not confined to people taking holidays in sunny climates. Outdoor workers who expose themselves unnecessarily to the sun can also be affected.



It is easy to prevent these effects by taking simple precautions such as:

- wearing long-sleeve shirts or loose clothing with a close weave;
- wearing hats with a wide brim; and
- taking breaks in the shade whenever possible.

HSE produces guidance for both employers and employees that gives information on the dangers and encourages sensible, protective behaviour. *Keep your top on* is a simple guidance leaflet aimed at employees.

In March this year a new public health campaign known as SunSmart was launched by Cancer Research UK (CRUK), which aims to target the high incidence of skin cancer in the UK. CRUK has been commissioned by the UK Departments of Health to run this national campaign, and is supported and guided by a UV health promotion group, that includes HSE.

Individual copies of HSE's leaflets can be obtained free of charge from HSE Books, see back page for details.

Further information about the SunSmart campaign can be found at www.sunsmart.org.uk

Call Infoline for HELP

Infoline is your first point of contact with HSE. You can contact HSE by telephone, e-mail, via the HSE website, minicom, fax and mail.

Infoline provides rapid access to HSE's wealth of health and safety information, and access to expert advice and guidance. All of our operators are NEBOSH-qualified and ready to deal with your enquiry in the strictest confidence. You don't even have to give your name.

Top five Infoline questions

- 1 What is the maximum/minimum temperature in the workplace?
- 2 Who is responsible for reporting accidents that occur to employees at someone else's premises?
- 3 How do I report accidents?
- 4 What details do you need to put on the new health and safety law poster?
- 5 What breaks am I entitled to under the working time regulations?

These questions are answered on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk

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