

SITE SAFE NEWS



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WHATEVER YOUR JOB *Look after your back*

- **Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)** are the biggest cause of occupational ill health in GB. MSDs include conditions affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, nerves and soft tissues often caused by manual handling and awkward posture.
- **2 million** people in GB suffered work-related ill health in 2004/05.
- **Construction** has the highest rate of MSDs.
- **56 000** Work-related MSD cases in construction per annum.
- Reported injuries to employees in 2004/2005 which involved handling:
 - **38%** of all over-3-day injuries;
 - **15%** of all major injuries.
- These are mostly back injuries from **manual handling**.



**CAN
BARROWS
OR
TROLLEYS
BE USED?**



**A load bearing
beam that can
be assembled in
pieces**

**CAN THE LOAD BE
CHANGED?**



**Coping stones
with lifting loops
cast in**

CAN THE RISK BE AVOIDED?

This photograph shows prefabricated accommodation units being lifted into place to form new living quarters for the army. The units come complete, fitted out, wired, plumbed and decorated. When linked up and built into an accommodation block, they form en-suite sleeping and study units. This method of construction avoids the need for manual handling of materials and thousands of working hours of lifting, bending, stretching and twisting.



CAN THE TASK BE MECHANISED?

STAY ACTIVE *Don't take back pain lying down*

If you have back pain, your doctor, physiotherapist, osteopath and pharmacist will all advise you to 'stay active'.

Most back pain is not caused by serious disease or damage and is called non-specific, simple low back pain. About 80% of us will get back pain in our lifetime, possibly from leisure, work or even normal activities. Most of us will get it more than once.

The people who cope best stay active, get back to work quickly and get on with their normal activities, despite the pain - but you should see your doctor if you are worried about the back pain or if the pain persists or suddenly gets worse.

Although aches and pains may last for some time, that doesn't mean it's serious. Getting stiff joints and muscles going again can be painful; athletes accept that when they start training, their muscles can hurt and they have to work through the pain. But that doesn't mean they are doing any damage.

Simple advice to help with back pain

- Back pain can be very painful, but if you rest for more than a day or two, it may prolong the pain and make things worse as back muscles will weaken if not used.
- Get back to normal activities as soon as possible and you should start to feel better.
- Even if the pain has not completely gone, try simple pain relief to manage the pain.



ENGAGEMENT AT WORK

On the Welsh Water Asset Investment Framework in South Wales, workers for civil engineering contractor AMEC take part in a committee called VOICE.



Another tip from this committee - the minutes are written up with pictures to illustrate the discussions, and circulated as posters to go in all the works canteens. Posters are also used to celebrate the achievements of VOICE – see left.

VOICE stands for **V**iews of **O**peratives **I**n the **C**onstruction **E**nvironment. The aim of the committee is to ensure that workers do have a voice – and that it is listened to. Part of the committee's aim is to innovate and propose new ways of working to reduce risks to workers' health and safety.

Discussions have been held over a long period to find the best lifting aid to handle heavy manhole covers. Three different types of lifter have been tried, including types with hydraulic lifting mechanisms. However the type of lifter shown in the photograph has been found to offer the best combination of rugged strength and flexibility – not all manhole covers are found in flat, accessible paved areas.

amec South East Team
Achievements in VOICE
 You asked for High-Vis Polo Shirts for the Summertime...you got them!

Demonstration from some of the VOICE Team wearing the polo shirts
 Guess who??
 Getting geared up
 Mind your step!

You asked for Better protection from the safety harnesses.....you got it!

KERB HANDLING

The good, the bad and the ugly



the good

the good

These workers are using a vacuum handling device for a long run of kerbs, significantly reducing manual handling and risk of back injury.



the bad

the bad

Known as the kerb dance! Heavy weights, no gloves and tripping hazards all add up to potential for injury to backs, hands and anything else they might drop the kerb onto.



the ugly

the ugly

Although they are sharing the load, they will also share the back pain.

Why not use this page of Site safe news as a poster to put up in your site office?



Workers - What can you do to protect yourself if your work may involve disturbing asbestos?

Do:

- Check whether there is likely to be any asbestos present.
- Ask to see the client's asbestos register.
- If you can't be sure that a material doesn't contain asbestos – assume it does.
- Check whether the work falls under requirements for licensing.
- Ensure you've received asbestos awareness training.
- Use personal protective equipment, including a suitable (eg FFP3) face mask.
- Clean up as you go – don't let waste pile up but remember don't sweep, use a suitable (H type) vacuum cleaner.
- Wash before you take a break and at the end of the day's work.
- Put asbestos waste in a suitable sealed container. You can use a heavy-duty polythene bag, put it in a second bag, and label the outer bag to show that it contains asbestos. Remember – asbestos waste needs to be taken to a licensed tip.

Don't:

- Use work methods which create a lot of dust, such as using power tools.
- Take home overalls you have worn while working with asbestos.
- Eat or drink in the work area.
- Smoke – the risk of lung cancer from asbestos is higher among smokers.

Training

It is important that people carrying out any work on asbestos materials are properly trained and supervised. If you do not have the right training and/or the job is not adequately supervised, chances are that the work will not be carried out properly. This can result in you and others being exposed to asbestos fibres. If you are self-employed you will need to obtain this training yourself. If you are an employee, your employer should arrange for you to be trained.

Dutyholder responsibilities

If you are responsible for maintenance and repair activities for non-domestic buildings, either through a contract or tenancy agreement, or because you own the building, then you have duties, as a 'dutyholder', under regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations.

What are the main dutyholder requirements?

Regulation 4 requires dutyholders to:

- take all reasonable steps to determine the location, amount and condition of materials likely to contain asbestos;
- presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- make and keep an up-to-date record of the location and condition of the asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) or presumed ACMs in the premises;
- assess the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres;
- prepare and **implement** a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed;
- review and monitor the plan periodically;

- provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them ie maintenance workers.

Types of asbestos

High risk ACMs include:

- Asbestos moulded or preformed lagging used as thermal insulation on pipes and boilers.
- Sprayed asbestos used for thermal insulation, fire protection, partitioning and ducts.
- Asbestos insulating board (AIB).
- Some ceiling tiles.
- Soffit boards below roofs.

Any removal or stripping of these ACMs, or work that could lead to high levels of fibres being released, is likely to require a specialist licensed contractor.

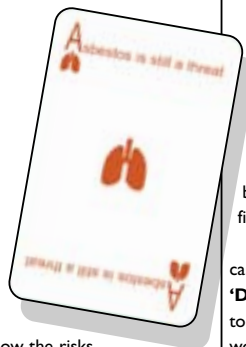
Lower risk ACMs include:

- Asbestos-containing floor tiles.
- Asbestos cement roofing and guttering.

Work on these ACMs is unlikely to require a licence but full risk assessments are needed, safe working practices must be used and those undertaking the work will require specific asbestos training.



Further guidance on asbestos, including: what work requires a licence and how to work safely, details of specialist licensed contractors, and free campaign material including promotional playing cards and information packs are available by visiting the HSE asbestos website at: www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos or calling Infoline on 0845 345 0055.



What is asbestos?
Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral. Its natural properties include the ability to withstand high heat and electrical currents. This made it very good for protecting buildings and equipment from heat and fire.

What are 'asbestos containing materials'?
The asbestos mineral was added to other materials such as cement, textiles and insulating board to form 'asbestos containing materials'. Although use and supply was banned in 1999 a lot of the material still exists in buildings including factories, shops and offices in materials like cement, textiles and insulating board.

Is asbestos dangerous?
Most asbestos containing material in good condition is safe. Asbestos is only dangerous when it is in a loose form, damaged, disturbed or worked on. This can release the asbestos fibres into the air. If these fibres are inhaled in over a long time, they may damage the lungs and can lead to very serious diseases, including cancer.

Who's likely to be harmed?
Repair and maintenance workers are most at risk. These people are most likely to disturb or damage asbestos containing materials and they often don't realise that they are working on asbestos. The 'duty to manage' law is designed to protect these workers by requiring those people who are responsible for repair and maintenance work to buildings to make sure they manage asbestos within that building.

What does asbestos containing material look like?
You can't tell if something contains asbestos just by looking at it (or even sniffing or tasting it). The only way to be absolutely sure is to take a small sample and get it tested in a laboratory. However you don't have to do this. You can presume it is asbestos and then take the appropriate precautions when working on the material and use appropriately trained workers, or licensed contractors.

Getting help
For more information visit www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos or call the HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055.

Other useful contacts:
Asbestos Removal Contractors Association: www.asrcweb.org.uk or tel: 01283 531126
The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors: www.rics.org or tel: 020 7334 3044

HSE
Health and Safety Executive
www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos
0845 345 0055

Asbestos - the facts

Asbestos-related disease is responsible for up to 3500 deaths a year, making it the UK's biggest work-related killer.

Asbestos was used extensively as a building material in Great Britain from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. Any building constructed or refurbished before 2000 could contain asbestos. If it is undisturbed and in good condition, most asbestos is safe, but can be deadly if the fibres become airborne and inhaled.

Every day, thousands of construction workers are gambling with their lives by working on buildings where asbestos is still present and where the risks are not being managed.

Builders and trades people, such as plumbers, electricians and carpenters, may encounter asbestos while at work. In fact anyone who drills into or cuts material, or maintains plant or equipment within a building, could be exposed to asbestos fibres.

This is why HSE launched a new campaign in September. The aims of the 'Don't take the gamble' initiative are to raise awareness among construction workers and dutyholders that asbestos is still a threat.



Working Well Together diary 2006/07

WWT groups around the country continue to spread the health and safety message to small construction companies and their workers with a wide range of awareness days.

Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)

10/11/06 Newcastle Upon Tyne (Durham County Cricket Club, Chester Le Street) contact *Debbie Flynn* Tel: 0191 202 6209

22/11/06 Eastbourne (Eastbourne Conference Centre) contact *Andrew Lambert* Tel: 01342 334293

15/02/07 York (Askham Bryan Agriculture College) contact *Barrie Ellis* Tel: 0113 283 2432

22/03/07 Nottingham (venue TBC) contact *Sharon Geeson* Tel: 0115 9712903

TBC/03/07 Herefordshire & Worcestershire (venue TBC) contact *Wayne Owen* Tel: 01782 602319

Safe and Sustainability Awareness Days (SSADs)

20/02/07 Wiltshire (Chippenham College)

contact *Yvonne Mazzotta* Tel: 0117 988 6012

22/02/07 Cornwall (Truro College) contact *Yvonne Mazzotta* Tel: 0117 988 6012

Designer Awareness Days (DADs)

20/11/06 Airdrie (Shyberry Excelsior Stadium) contact *Irene Ward* Tel: 0141 275 3109

17/01/07 Herefordshire & Worcestershire (Thomas Vale HQ) contact *Wayne Owen* Tel: 01782 602319

23/01/07 Herefordshire & Worcestershire (Thomas Vale HQ) contact *Wayne Owen* Tel: 01782 602319

Occupational Health Awareness Days (OHADs)

07/11/06 North Wales (Plas Madoc Leisure Centre, Wrexham) contact *Sharon Holmes* Tel: 029 20263033

08/11/06 North Wales (Canolfan Hamdden Glaslyn, Stryd Y Llan, Gwynedd) contact *Sharon Holmes* Tel: 029 20263033

To book a place at any of the above events, or to find out more about Working Well Together, visit www.wwt.uk.com

WORKER ENGAGEMENT

Research findings

A conference was held in London on 20 September to discuss the findings of research carried out by Glasgow Caledonian University. The research examined different approaches to worker engagement on smaller, shorter duration refurbishment sites. Some lessons have emerged which supervisors and managers on smaller projects can benefit from taking on board.

Training - To understand the principles of worker engagement.

Induction - Allow workers to raise questions and share their health and safety experience from other sites.

Daily briefings - These provide the opportunity for two-way communication and recording of action points.

Site walk - Find time to observe, encourage, discuss consequences and talk about issues other than work.

Leaving survey - Interview workers leaving the site.

For more information contact **Dr Billy Hare** or **Dr Ian Cameron** at: b.hare@gcal.ac.uk



Site Health and Safety Manager, Ian McKenzie carrying out an induction. For the full story visit www.hse.gov.uk/construction/engagement

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Letters and items of interest for SITE SAFE NEWS should be sent to The Editor, SITE SAFE NEWS, Health & Safety Executive, Redgrave Court, Merton 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: 0845 345 0055 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk

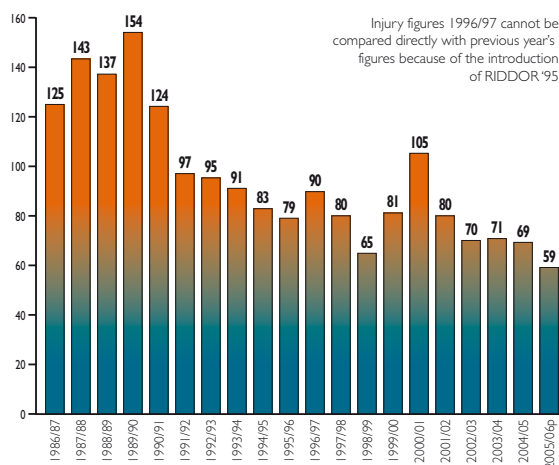
STATISTICS *Latest*

In August, statistics released by HSE showed that 59 construction workers died at work during 2005/06. This is a reduction from 69 deaths in the previous year, and the lowest figure on record. Of the 59 deaths:

- eight occurred during the construction of commercial buildings;
- eight during domestic projects;
- eight were on projects involving special trades; and
- eight were in the construction of highways and roads.

While it is good news that less people are dying on construction sites than ever before, one death is still one too many, and HSE is working in partnership with the industry and trade unions to prevent the tragic loss of life at work. Meanwhile, the most common causes of death on sites are sadly still the same:

- falls from height - by far and away the biggest cause;
- being struck by a moving/falling object;
- being struck by a vehicle;
- being trapped by something collapsing/overturning; and
- contact with electricity.



For more information on how to stay safe and healthy when working in construction visit HSE's construction website at www.hse.gov.uk/construction

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Find out more online...

about HSE's advice for the construction industry, at: www.hse.gov.uk/construction or contact Infoline on 0845 345 0055

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