
EDITOR'S NOTES

CONTENTS

FOR ACTION

- [LA Prosecutions data 2006/07, p 1](#)

FOR INFO

- [Ladders Week 2007 Update, p. 2](#)
- [FIT3 Topics 2007/08, p.3](#)
- [New facility for RIDDOR reports, p. 3](#)
- ['Stop Slips in Kitchens' Employers Pack, p. 3](#)
- [Cans grow on trees, p. 4](#)

NEW GUIDANCE

- [What's new on the website, p. 5](#)
- [Withdrawn Local Authority Circulars, p. 5](#)
- [Preventing slips, trips and falls in Contact Centres, p.6](#)

GOOD PRACTICE

- [DSE Forum, p. 6](#)

It is that time of year again when we need the help of all LAs to compile the prosecution statistics for the 2006/2007 financial year. Many of you will be aware of the recent criticism of HSE about the number of Construction Industry prosecutions, so there is no need to tell you this is a sensitive subject. Every LA should complete a NIL RETURN or details of each case laid, whether successful or unsuccessful, with a final hearing date between 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. We are making the reporting process easier for you via a simple on-line survey which can be accessed at "Prosecutions returns" on the homepage of the HELA Extranet. Our figures will only add up if we hear from EVERY LA! Further details are given in the first article.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find information on recycling, display screen equipment and changes to RIDDOR reporting.

There is also an update on ladders week as part of the fall from height programme. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to Fallington on the HSE website for all those involved in working at heights - I just hope the rescue services are as good as the Trumpton fire brigade! You will also see in the newsletter that as part of our review of guidance we will in future notify you of guidance that has been withdrawn as well as new guidance issued.

And finally, the new law banning smoking in enclosed public places in Northern Ireland is now in place. Good luck to all those enforcing the ban. Only England to go now!

Richard Wilson
Editor

Please feel free to comment on the Newsletter by writing to our dedicated e-mail address with your contributions, comments and suggestions: lau.newsletter@hse.gsi.gov.uk or Tel: 0151-951-3114

FOR ACTION

LA Prosecutions data 2006/07

Deadline 31 July

A letter has recently been sent out to Chief Environmental Health Officers, requesting information on **ALL** prosecutions with a final hearing date between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007. A Nil return or details of each case is required, whether successful, unsuccessful or withdrawn. Only provide detail on those cases where information has been laid and in Scotland where referred to the Procurator Fiscal's Office and also authorized for a hearing.

Even if your LA has taken no prosecutions during the year, it is important to submit a NIL RETURN and details of your Council. This is to ensure an acknowledgement of our survey is received from every LA.

The deadline date for submission of prosecution data is: 31 July 2007.

For the first time ever by completing the on-line survey for each case on the HELA Extranet there is no need to submit a proforma. You can access the relevant page here.

Please be aware that the Extranet will not provide you with an instant acknowledgement that your proforma has been submitted, this will be sent to you separately via email.

There is still the option to submit your proformas using a more traditional route of email or post and the prosecutions instructions document on the Extranet will give you all of these details.

Shortly after receipt, the Local Authority Unit will contact you to validate the information you have submitted. It is essential that all of the details are recorded accurately, to avoid defamation and legal challenge from defendants.

Also this year, we are requesting that Local Authorities send LAU copies of any Formal Cautions issued during this period. Our address is contained within the guidance document referred to above.

If you have any further queries, please contact;

Tracy Hamilton
Tel: 0151 951 3114
Email: tracy.hamilton@hse.gsi.gov.uk

FOR INFORMATION

Ladders Week 2007 Update

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are running Ladders Week 2007 in June and July (a week is a long time in HSE). This is part of your priority FIT3 programme work. Over 40 Local Authorities (LA) across the country have already been in contact to see what they can do for Ladders Week. It is not too late, for more information please contact tony.almond@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Why is LA involvement so important?

We are keen to ensure that the Ladders Week initiative has a local feel and therefore it is vital that local authorities get in touch and see what you can do to support this initiative. HSE have teamed up with a number of ladder manufacturers and hire companies to help get dodgy ladders out of the workplace. In exchange for these substandard ladders these companies will offer up to 40% off a new ladder or other more suitable equipment.

Too busy?

There are lots of things you could do to support Ladders Week all you need to do is let us know how much you wish to be involved. I have listed a few things you could do below.

- **Inspection activity** – HSE inspection activity will take place in June (construction sites) and July (building and plant maintenance companies). LA inspectors can look at ladder use on the sites they visit and talk to duty holders about their contractors. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/campaign/inspectionbriefing.htm>, the inspector briefing area of the website for the falls Topic Inspection Pack or see LAC 77/6 – “Operational Interventions in 2007/08 at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/77-6.htm> to help deliver the falls from height and slips and trips programmes.”
- **Information on website** – you can include information on Ladders Week and ladder safety on your website. We will be updating our Fallington site soon with a new “Ladder Street” you are welcome to link the site below to your LA site. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/heightaware/flashindex.htm>)

- **Contact duty holders** – you can also contact duty holders about Ladder Exchange. Tell them about the risks of using a ladder that is not fit for purpose and how they can get better equipment.
- **Contact retailers involved in Ladders Week** – Your local Speedy Hire and HSS hire shops will be involved in Ladders Week and most will run a Ladder Exchange scheme. They will also offer advice on safe ladder use and demonstrations of alternative access equipment. You can work with them on this. Ladder Exchange builds on "Ladder Amnesty" initiatives pioneered by Local Authorities. Contact the shop manager to discuss how you can work together.

We can help with all of the above and more. For more information on Ladders Week please contact;

Tony Almond
Tel: 020 7717 6381
Email: tony.almond@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Fit3 Topics for 2007-08

Please visit www.hse.gov.uk/fit3street to access the Fit3 Online LA Portfolio, which:

- will help you identify and deliver the priority health and safety topics for 2007-08;
- contains links to Topic Inspection Packs and Local Authority Circulars (LACs);
- provides easy access to helpful pages of the HSE website; and,
- gives you the contact details of Fit3 teams, should you have any questions or need to raise any particular issues.

So do save the link in your favorites, use it often, and please let us have any feedback you may have on how we might improve it to better meet your needs!

[Please note: you can also access the online portfolio through the [HELA Extranet](#).]

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New reset facility for RIDDOR reports

Local Authority staff with responsibility for RIDDOR reports can now reset RIDDOR reports that they have accepted off the RIDDOR website. This means that they will no longer have to contact HSE ICC Support (aka OU) staff before they can re-allocate reports. Instructions on how to do this are available on the Notice Board on your individual secure Home Page.

Sue Cornmell, Incident Contact Centre Management team
Tel: 0151 951 3034
Email: sue.cornmell@hse.gsi.gov.uk

'Stop Slips in Kitchens' employers packs

The 'Stop Slips in Kitchens' employers packs will soon be ready for distribution. The packs have been developed to support the Stop Slips in Kitchens initiative, due to launch on the 4 June this year. Details of the initiative can be found in the LAC 'Preventing slips and trips in kitchens within catering' - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/77-5.htm>

Every Local Authority will be sent out a pack to look at as soon as they become available. But, rather than filling offices with large quantities of packs they do not require, inspectors are asked to request packs to send out/hand out to employers by contacting:

Helena Allum
Tel: 01752 276323
Email: helena.allum@hse.gsi.gov.uk

There is no limit on how many you can order, but to ensure there are sufficient packs printed to satisfy demand, it would be very helpful if anyone who requires copies contact Helena as soon as possible.

Within your order please be sure to include details on who to send the packs to, how many copies are required and by when.

Cans Grow into Trees

Canny residents in Bolton have secured 95 new trees thanks to recycling more than six million aluminium cans.

Bolton Council signed up with the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (Alupro), which awards local authorities free trees for every tonne of aluminium that is recycled for environmental projects here and in Africa.

Between April 2004 and April 2006, Bolton Council collected 95 tonnes of aluminium, equivalent to 6,175,000 cans. Eighty five new Alder trees were planted in the Middlebrook Valley by students from Bolton Community College's Independent Living Skills course. The students ran a can recycling scheme last year and donated cans to the trees campaign.

Ten trees, such as mango and cashew will also be planted in the Gabio Forest, Burkina Faso, West Africa. The chosen trees will supply food and be used for medicinal uses, and because the flowers encourage the production of honey, which is sold in local markets, will also generate much-needed income to the village communities.

Leader of Bolton Council, Councillor Cliff Morris, said:

"I want to thank residents in Bolton for their superb can recycling efforts. Work is already underway to create a new outdoor classroom and picnic area in the Middlebrook Valley, thanks to the Council winning the Race to Recycle Awards 2006.

"The new trees will help to improve the landscape there, protect different habitats and encourage more wildlife."

Ruth Meeke, Regional Programme Manager for Alupro, added:

"The Trees for the UK, Trees for Africa campaign has been very successful throughout the UK. Residents in Bolton have done exceptionally well by recycling 95 tonnes of aluminium cans throughout the campaign. Eighty five broadleaf trees have been planted locally with 10 trees planted in Africa."

For more details about recycling ring Bolton Council on tel: 01204 336633.

Did you know...one recycled can saves enough energy to run a television set for three hours, three in four drink cans are made from aluminium and aluminium is the world's second most used metal?

NEW GUIDANCE

New material published on the HSE website/Local Authority Unit section of the HSE website

The following material has recently been published on the HSE Website/Local Authority Unit section of the HSE website:

- Disease Reduction Programme website
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/02/disease-reduction-programme-website/>
- Reporting of incidents in the workplace – RIDDOR
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/02/reporting-of-incidents-in-the-workplace/>
- CDM regulations come in to force
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/03/cdm-regulations-come-in-to-force/>
- Health and safety in the cleaning industry
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/03/health-and-safety-in-the-cleaning-industry/>
- Amended work at height regulations
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/04/amended-work-at-height-regulations/>
- Carpet retail: MSD risk factors assessment
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/18/carpet-retail-msd-risk-factors-assessment/>
- Reducing musculoskeletal disorder in the workplace
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/23/reducing-musculoskeletal-disorder-in-the-workplace/>
- HSE at Safety and Health Expo 2007
<http://www.hsenews.com/2007/04/24/hse-at-safety-and-health-expo-2007/>
- LAC 5/23- Inspection intervention on worker protection: asbestos duty to manage
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/5-23.htm>
- LAC 15/2 – Inspection intervention 2007/8: Preventing work-related contact dermatitis in the catering industry
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/15-2.htm>
- LAC 15/3 - Preventing dermatitis: intervention in the hair and beauty industries
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/15-3.htm>
- LAC 55/9 – Injuries Reduction Programme 2007-2008: Prevention of fatal and major injuries through Safe Interventions Project 2004- 2008
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/55-9.htm>
- LAC 77/6 - Operational interventions in 2007/08 to help deliver the falls from height and slips and trips programmes.
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/77-6.htm>

Withdrawn Local Authority Circulars (LACs)

The following Local Authority Circulars (LACs) have been withdrawn from the LAU pages of the HSE website. These circulars have been withdrawn because they were no longer current.

LAC 15/1 - Preventing dermatitis: intervention in the hair and beauty industries has now been updated and replaced by LAC 15/3.

Publication of 'Preventing slips, trips and falls in Contact Centres' Guidance

New guidance aimed at preventing slips, trips and falls in contact centres was launched recently and is available on the North West Contact Centre Project (NWCCP) web site via <http://www.nwccp.org/docs/index2a.htm>.

The NWCCP, born out of a desire to improve the working environment for staff in contact centres, brought together industry representatives, health and safety experts, local authorities and union representatives in producing this new guidance on how slips, trips and falls can be avoided in the workplace.

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GOOD PRACTICE

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Forum

This forum is a place where Local Authorities and HSE can exchange information about DSE compliance issues. In the past it has contained details of relevant LA initiatives on DSE, notifications of forthcoming events, and descriptions of revised guidance and other sources of information. It has also discussed emerging issues and even breaking news. Although there is nothing specific to report in this issue please watch this space for future developments.

Here are our answers to the competition questions set in the February edition:

1. A DSE user arranges their own eye test and then goes to their employer and asks them to pay the optician's bill for the test. Is the employer obliged to pay?

No, the employer is not obliged to pay for such a test retrospectively. However if the employer refuses to pay for a test the user has arranged for themselves, the employer is obliged to provide another test on request. (Some employers may therefore decide they may just as well pay for the first test).

The DSE Regulations state that the duty is on employers to provide a test where a user requests one. It is up to the employer to decide how to do this, whether by arranging for all users to visit a particular optometrist or doctor nominated by the employer; by joining a voucher scheme; or by allowing users to make their own arrangements with optometrists and reimbursing costs afterwards.

2. Is the use of Satellite Navigation (Sat Nav) equipment covered by the DSE Regulations - and why?

Not usually. There are several issues here:

If the equipment is on board a means of transport (cars, boats, planes, etc) it is subject to the exclusion in Regulation 1(4) (b) and hence the Regulations do not apply.

A handheld sat-nav device being used by, for example, an outdoor pursuits instructor leading a hill walk, could conceivably be subject to the Regulations – being regarded as portable DSE. However due to Regulation 1(4) (d) the Regulations would only apply if the sat-nav was in prolonged use (for work purposes). This might only rarely be the case, and in practical terms it would not seem worthwhile to try and apply the regulations in these kinds of circumstances.

3. Does sharing computer equipment or workstations (as in "hot desking") increase the risk of catching diseases?

We have seen no evidence to suggest that hot desking increases the risk of catching diseases. Sharing computer equipment is no more hazardous than sharing any other office equipment. The only exception to this would be headsets, where it is not advisable to share.

4. For a user doing full-time intensive computer work with no opportunities for non-DSE work, which of the following would be an acceptable schedule of rest breaks?

- a) 10 - 15 minute break every two hours**
- b) One hour for lunch and two 15 minute comfort breaks**
- c) 5 minutes every hour**
- d) Variable short breaks at the user's discretion**
- e) Six hours sleep in every 24 hours.**

(c) is better than (a) or (b) – though one hopes that in addition to 5 minutes in every hour, users are allowed lunch and tea breaks!

However, none of the first three is ideal. Answer (d) will generally be better than any of them, as it is good for the user to have some discretion. A good working pattern for many situations will have a lot of short informal pauses when the user can break just for a minute or so, and stretch and move before resuming their DSE work. Users having this regime of “micro-breaks” should also be encouraged to have some longer breaks or changes of activity that take them away from their computer work, with a change of posture.

If users are given discretion about when to take breaks, they should also be trained about the need for breaks. We recommend employers should check from time to time that sensible breaks/pauses are being taken; it is very easy to get immersed in a job, especially if working towards a deadline, and forget to pause sufficiently. Taking enough short breaks will help to prevent fatigue and keep the user fresh, and may therefore help productivity.

Finally, if anyone has chosen option (e) – no comment, except that we would not like to work for you and we hope an inspector calls soon!

Thank you to those who took the time to enter. Unfortunately nobody managed a full set of correct answers. If you want to discuss any of these answers, or any other issue relating to DSE health and safety please contact me.

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