

Sector plan for health and safety: **Construction**

The construction sector ranges from large, high-profile projects to small-scale works by the self-employed. Around 2.2 million people work in the sector, representing around 7% of the GB workforce.

The industry contributes around £97 billion to the economy and is dominated by smaller firms with around 84% having no employees and another 14% having 9 or fewer workers.

Current position

Construction remains a hazardous industry, accounting for almost 30% of all fatal injuries to workers. In the five years to March 2016, 210 construction workers died and many more received life-changing injuries at work.

Performance has improved over the past decade, and the number and rate of fatal incidents, work-related injury and ill health show a general, long-term downward trend. However, the levels of incidents and ill health remain high, with some recent signs of the numbers levelling off.

Developments in the management of health risks have not kept pace with safety improvements.

In 2015/16, 3.7% of the workforce suffered from an illness they believe was caused, or made worse, by their work. The sector has a statistically significantly higher rate of occupational lung disease and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) than the average for all industries.

The majority of fatal incidents involve small businesses, and nearly half of all reported injuries occur in refurbishment activities.

Risks on larger projects can be substantial but, generally, large projects are better at controlling risks than most small projects, where there can be a lack of awareness of even basic health and safety standards.

Outcomes and priorities

Construction will continue to be a priority sector for HSE. We want to see a continuation of the downward trends in fatal incidents, work-related

injury and ill health, which will be tackled by achieving the following outcomes:

- Embedding the principles of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM)
- Focusing on a reduction in the cases of occupational lung disease, MSDs and work-related stress
- Supporting small businesses to achieve improved risk management and control



What HSE will do to #HelpGBworkwell

We will secure effective management and control of risk by:

- ensuring the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM 2015) are understood and a proportionate approach is taken toward compliance by collaborating with construction clients, principal designers and designers and working with other health and safety regulators (eg Office for Nuclear Regulation and Office of Rail and Road) where relevant;
- directing inspection and enforcement at those failing to manage and control risks, focusing on health risks, refurbishment activity, and licensed asbestos removal;
- visiting targeted dutyholders to encourage self-assessment and progressive development of their health risk management arrangements using leading indicators in the Construction Health Risks Toolkit.

We will lead and engage with others to improve workplace health and safety by:

- engaging with the tripartite Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC) and other stakeholder groups to promote industry ownership of effective health and safety risk management through:
 - case studies;
 - guidance and advice;
 - construction-focused Stress Management Standards;
 - Working Well Together events;
- carrying out insight research to develop interventions which use the right mix of messages, tools, information and incentives that will help small and micro construction businesses comply proportionately with CDM 2015;
- helping to identify and tackle unnecessary business-on-business burdens (blue tape);
- engaging professional bodies to enhance the skills and knowledge of future designers through effective teaching of design risk management across built environment higher education courses;
- demonstrating the effective use of building information modelling to improve the sharing of risk information, coordination and collaboration throughout the design and construction process;
- engaging with supply chains to reduce risks from manual handling and improve the provision of welfare facilities across the sector.

We will reduce the likelihood of low-frequency, high-impact catastrophic incidents by:

- early and strategic interventions with major projects, including HS2, Thames Tideway, and power generation decommissioning and new build;
- developing clear standards of construction risk leadership and leading performance indicators through engagement with stakeholders.