

Construction firms targeted in new health inspections

Construction firms across Great Britain have been targeted on their health standards by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) it has been announced.

The inspections were the first time that the regulator has targeted the industry with a specific focus on respiratory risks and occupational lung disease, looking at the measures businesses have in place to protect their workers' lungs from the likes of asbestos, silica and wood dust.

Inspectors visited construction businesses and sites across the country throughout October and were specifically looking for evidence of construction workers knowing the risks, planning their work and using the right controls.

According to the HSE's website, Chief inspector of construction Peter Baker, said:

"Around 100 times as many workers die from diseases caused or made worse by their work than are killed in construction accidents.

Annually, work-related cancers, mainly linked to asbestos and silica, are estimated to kill 3,500 people from the industry. Thousands of others

suffer life-changing illnesses from their work. Not all lung diseases take years to develop. Some, like acute silicosis or occupational asthma, can occur more quickly.

"As a result, we've launched this inspection initiative to find out what exactly businesses in the construction industry are doing today to protect their workers' health, particularly when it comes to exposure to dust and damage to lungs.

"We want construction workers to be aware of the risks associated with the activities they carry out on a daily basis; be conscious of the fact their work may create hazardous dust; and consider how this could affect their health, in some cases irreversibly. We want businesses and their workers to think of the job from start to finish and avoid creating dust or disturbing asbestos by working in different ways. We want to see construction firms encouraging their workers to firstly keep the dust down and wear the right mask and clothing.

"Ultimately, we want construction workers' lungs to be protected from ill health, so they can go home healthy to their families and enjoy long careers in this important industry."

Selfie cards are available in support of the campaign at: <https://bit.ly/2QWLYib>



IPCC special report paints a bleak picture if global warming exceeds 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels

After three years of research, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a special report on the impact of global warming of 1.5C.

There are some key messages that come through from the report:

- The first is that limiting warming to 1.5C brings a lot of benefits compared with limiting it to two degrees
- The unprecedented nature of the changes that are required if we are to limit warming to 1.5C . There will need to be changes to energy systems, the way we manage land and changes to the way we move around with transportation



The researchers have used facts and numbers to paint a picture of the world with a dangerous fever, caused by humans.

It was commonly thought that if we could keep warming below two degrees this century, then the changes we would experience would be manageable.

The research suggests that is no longer the case. The study says that going past 1.5C is dicing with the planet's liveability. And the 1.5C temperature "guard rail" could be exceeded in just 12 years, in 2030.

We can stay below it - but it will require urgent, large-scale changes from governments and individuals and we will have to invest massive amount of money every year, about 2.5% of global gross domestic product (GDP), the value of all goods and services produced, for two decades.

Even then, we will still need machines, trees and plants to capture carbon from the air that we can then store deep underground.

The report says there must be rapid and significant changes in four big global systems: energy, land use , cities and industry

But it adds that the world cannot meet its target without changes by individuals, urging people to:

- Buy less meat, milk, cheese and butter and more locally sourced seasonal food , while throwing less of it away
- Driving electric cars but walk or cycle short distances
- Take trains and buses instead of planes
- Use videoconferencing instead of business travel
- Use a washing line instead of a tumble dryer
- Insulate homes
- Demand low carbon in every consumer product

The report says to limit warming to 1.5C, will involve "annual



average investment needs in the energy system of around \$2.4 trillion" between 2016 and 2035.

The researchers say that if we fail to keep temperature rises below 1.5C, we are in for some significant and dangerous changes to our world.

The report says essentially 100% of coral reefs will be destroyed at about two degrees of warming. Global sea-level will rise about 10cm (4in) more if we let warming go to 2C. That may not sound like much but keeping to 1.5C means that 10 million fewer people would be exposed to the risks of flooding. There are also significant impacts on ocean temperatures and acidity, and the ability to grow crops such as rice, maize and wheat.

The report can be accessed at:
<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

Did you know?

Workers are as likely to have an accident in the first six months at a workplace as during the whole of the rest of their working life.

Why is that the case?

During the first 6 months at a workplace, there may be additional risk factors such as:

- Lack of experience of working in a new industry or workplace
- Lack of familiarity with the job and the work environment
- Reluctance to raise concerns (or not knowing how to)
- Eagerness to impress workmates and managers

This means workers new to a site:

- May not recognise hazards as a potential source of danger
- May not understand 'obvious' rules for use of equipment
- May be unfamiliar with site layout - especially where site hazards may change from day to day

How do we know this is the case?

Accidents reported in accordance with RIDDOR give us an indication of just how significant the issue is. The figures in the following table are the number of RIDDOR-reportable accidents and the number of accidents of all kinds expected for every 100 000 workers.

The table below shows how much higher the risk of having an accident is for new starters, compared to those who have been working for longer.

Length of time in job	Reportable injuries	All workplace injuries
< 6 months	3,316	9,861
6 to 12 months	1,023	3,821
1 to 5 years	1,084	3,092
> 5 years	973	2,829

Young workers and migrant workers are especially vulnerable

Young people may lack the experience and maturity at work of their colleagues, so could be more at risk.

Analysis of investigated accidents to vulnerable migrant/foreign workers (fatal and selected non-fatal) in the construction sector shows:

- Eight out of 16 fatal accidents happened during the first ten days on site, half of them on the very first day.
- Only two of those who died had been in the UK a year or more.
- Only five of the 16 migrant workers killed were known to have even limited experience of the UK construction industry - none of the injured was known to have any.
- The pattern of accidents (by type) is broadly the same as that for other workers in the sector.

Ways to protect new workers

- **Capability** - Assess the new starter's capabilities. For example: literacy and numeracy levels; general health; work experience; physical capability to do the job; familiarity with the work being done and the working environment. You should also assess any cultural and language issues too if they would present a risk
- **Induction** - Provide an induction. Plan it carefully, including photos of hazards where possible, and use plain, simple language. Take time to walk around the workplace or site with new workers and show them where the main hazards exist
- **Control measures** - Make sure the control measures to protect against risk are up to date and are being properly used and maintained: involve employees in discussions about risks; emphasise the importance of reporting accidents and near misses; arrange any necessary health surveillance; and provide any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)
- **Information** - Provide relevant information, instruction and training about the risks that new workers may be exposed to and the precautions they will need to take to avoid those risks.
- **Supervision** - Provide adequate supervision. Make sure workers know how to raise concerns and supervisors are familiar with the possible problems due to unfamiliarity and inexperience.
- **Check understanding** - Check workers have understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely, and are acting on it, especially during the vital first days/weeks at work.

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Agency worker injured on waste conveyor

A haulage and waste processing business has been fined after an agency worker's hand was drawn into an in-running nip on a waste sorting conveyor.

The Court heard how, on 27 September 2016, an 18-year-old agency worker was trying to clear a blockage beneath a waste conveyor belt. He reached in with his hand to remove the material causing the blockage when his hand was drawn in by the in-running nip on the conveyor system. He suffered partial amputation of his finger and a fractured elbow.

An investigation into the incident by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found there was inadequate guarding around the conveyor belt to prevent workers hands being caught up in the conveyor.

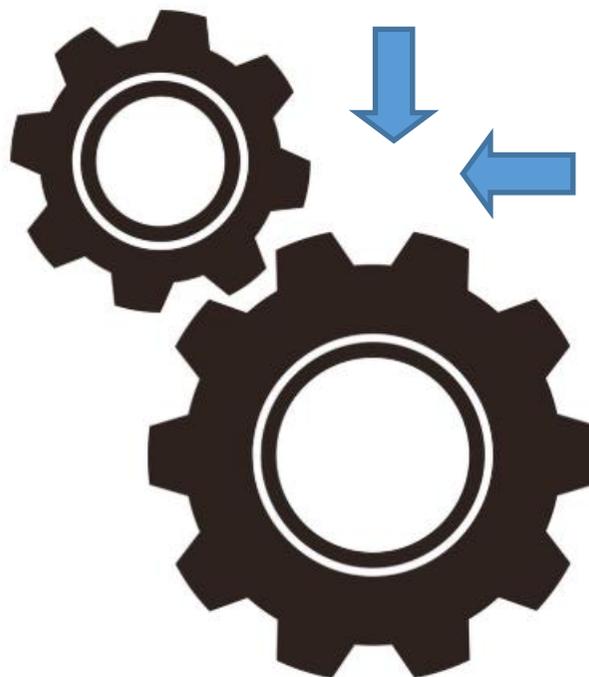
Loosemores Transport Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £18,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,026.70.

HSE inspector Wendy Campbell said after the hearing: "A young man's life has been changed because the company failed to ensure there was correct guarding on the conveyor belt."

Key lessons

- Check machinery guarding is adequate and prevents access to dangerous parts of machinery

In-running nip points hazards are caused by the rotating parts on machinery. Parts can rotate in opposite directions while their axes are parallel to each other. These parts may be in contact (producing a nip point) or in close proximity. In the latter case, stock fed between two rolls produces a nip point. This danger is common on machines with intermeshing gears, rolling mills, and cylinders. A typical example is the action of cogs that can draw an object into the pinch-point.



Vibration fine

British Airways Avionic Engineering Limited has been fined for failing to assess the risk to workers from hand arm vibration.

Crown Court heard how people working at the company were exposed to vibration from use of a wet blasting cabinet and vibrating hand tools. It was not until late in 2013 that action was taken by the company to assess and reduce vibration risk, despite the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations having been in force since July 2005 and were preceded by similar risk assessment requirements.

British Airways Avionic Engineering Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 5 of the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. They were fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £25,297.57.

Key lessons

- Assess the risk posed by vibration and inform those exposed to the risk of the dangers and necessary control measures

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Helen Turner said:

"Unless vibration is identified and properly assessed, an employer won't know the level of risk, and whether action is needed to protect workers. It is very important that people exposed to hand arm vibration at work are informed of the symptoms of early exposure and given opportunities to discuss their health so that they can be protected from serious Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome."

Guilty pleas relating to refinery fire



Valero Energy UK Limited and B & A Contracts Limited have pleaded guilty to charges under Sections 2 (1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 relating to the deaths of Dennis Riley, Robert Broome, Andrew Jenkins and Julie Jones and major injuries to Andrew Phillips who were all working on the Amine Recovery Unit when an explosion and subsequent fire took place on 2 June 2011.

This prosecution has been brought by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The case is next due to be heard at Swansea Crown Court on 2 November 2018.

A HSE spokesperson said: "HSE acknowledges the defendants' guilty plea but will not make a further comment until after sentencing."

Energy company fined

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy has been sentenced after a contractor was injured by a falling steel wire coil.

The Magistrates' Court heard how, on 23 April 2017, a contractor was working at the Galloper Offshore Wind Farm pre-assembly site in Great Yarmouth when a steel wire coil, weighing 50kg, dropped onto their left forearm and wrist.

The worker suffered a fractured wrist as a result of the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy Ltd failed to ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and adequate control measures were in place to prevent the injury.

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy Ltd was found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £66,000. and ordered to pay £10,106.38 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Steve Lewis commented:

"This could have been easily prevented if the defendant had put in place simple measures to reduce the risk of injury from dropped objects.

"Undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessment and developing safe system of work which follow the hierarchy of control are an important element of risk control and reduction."
"

Machinery incident leads to fine

Forterra Building Products Limited has been fined after a worker had his left arm amputated and was left paralysed from the chest down after being drawn into machinery.

The Magistrates' Court heard how on 8 July 2017, Eddie Ely, a chargehand with Forterra Building Products Ltd was working with a group of colleagues to remove a blockage and spillage on a conveyor when he was drawn into the conveyor system.

Guards had been removed from the machine but the power had not been isolated.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Forterra Building Products Ltd had failed to properly ensure that machines were always isolated from power, to be made safe, before guarding was removed from machinery.

Forterra Building Products Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc act 1974.

Total fines of £200,000 were imposed with costs of £7529.11.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Steven Boyd said:

"This case shows the devastating consequences of coming into contact with dangerous machinery. It is crucial that companies have a clear procedure for isolating machinery and they have appropriate supervision and monitoring to ensure it is adhered to."

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Hand injury results in £275k fine

Symmetry Medical Sheffield Limited, trading as Tecomet, has been sentenced for safety breaches after a worker suffered serious injuries.

The Magistrates' Court heard how on 8 August 2016, the worker was helping to move a hardness testing machine when it fell from the pedestrian pallet truck it was being transported on and struck his left hand.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the machine, which was resting on a stand, was lifted with a pedestrian pallet truck by the worker. The worker had not been trained on how to use the truck and the machine stand did not have suitable channels for the forks of the truck.

The machine and stand were not secured to the pallet truck and the machine fell and came away from the stand. It toppled towards a wall and struck the workers hand resulting in a full amputated finger and impact damage to a second finger.

Symmetry Medical Sheffield Ltd trading as Tecomet pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £275,000.00 with £1237.00 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Anuja Mistry-Raval said:

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by implementing suitable control measures and adopting safe working practices. The risks of loads falling from lifting equipment when not properly attached or secured in place are well known. Suitable systems of work are fundamental for ensuring workers' safety."

Young worker seriously injured

A builder from Cornwall has been sentenced after one of his employees sustained serious, life-changing hand injuries whilst operating a handheld circular saw.

The Magistrates' Court heard how David Avent, trading as David Avent Building Services, undertook a barn refurbishment in Callington during February 2017. On 7 February, a worker, who had recently turned 17, was using a circular saw to cut wooden flooring sheets when the blade made contact with his hand causing serious, life-changing injuries. The saw blade cut fully through his index finger, three quarters through his middle finger and half way through his ring finger.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found David Avent had no record of any information, instruction and training that he had provided to his employee in the safe use of the circular saw nor had he ensured that safe working practices were followed when cutting the flooring sheet. The investigation also found that circular saw blade had not been properly adjusted for the size of material being cut at the time of the incident and the flooring sheet was not appropriately supported whilst being cut.

Key lessons

- Assess the risks and apply effective control measures to minimise the dangers from contact with dangerous parts of machinery

David Avent pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He has been fined £1,120 and ordered to pay costs of £8489.48.

Injury while repairing machinery

A quarry operator has been fined after an employee had his hand and arm caught in a conveyor belt.

Lochmaddy Sherriff Court heard how, on 2 November 2016, employees of MacAulay Askernish Limited were undertaking maintenance work on the conveyor belt of a screener unit that was slipping at Askernish Quarry on the Isle of South Uist. One of the workers was leaning through the opening in the conveyor frame when his hand was pulled into the nip point between the drive drum and conveyor belt. His arm quickly became entangled in the mechanism, causing severe injury, permanent disfigurement and impairment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the guarding of the screener unit was not adequate. It also found the company failed to have a suitable procedure for isolating the screener unit and to ensure the unit was maintained in good repair.

Macaulay Askernish Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(1) of the Quarries Regulations 1999 and was fined £30,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector, Mike Tetley said:

"This injury was easily preventable and the risks from this type of equipment are well-known.

"Companies operating belt conveyors must ensure access has been prevented to dangerous parts and that guards are properly maintained. Having a secure isolation procedure in place is also an essential control when undertaking maintenance work."

Vehicle collision leads to fine

A Glossop-based company has been fined after a visiting tanker collided with a fork lift truck. The Magistrates' Court heard how, on 23 June 2017, a tanker was reversing into a tanker discharge bay at Dinting Lodge in Glossop when it collided at low speed with a fork lift truck. No workers were injured in the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that the company had insufficient control of workplace transport, in particular, reversing vehicles.

Carpenter Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,302.

Key lessons

- Reversing vehicles need to be segregated from other vehicles and pedestrians to prevent risk of collision and injury
- Site safety rules should include provision for supervising reversing manoeuvres



Pirelli Tyres Ltd fined

Pirelli Tyres Ltd has been fined after two employees had their arms broken by the same machine.

The Magistrates' Court heard how, on 29 November 2013, an employee of Pirelli Tyres Ltd was loading the stripline machine when his left arm was pulled in by a roller.

On 31 August 2015 a second employee had his left arm pulled in by the same roller whilst trying to make an adjustment during a production run.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the machine, which was manufactured by Pirelli in 2003, was not properly guarded, despite the first incident.

Pirelli Tyres Ltd of Derby Road, Burton-on-Trent pleaded guilty to two breaches of Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The company was fined £512,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,820.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Matthew Tinsley said:

“Dangerous parts of machinery must be guarded to prevent access. Machines that are built in-house for a company’s own use must meet modern guarding standards, just as if they were going to be placed on the open market.

“This machine should have been appropriately guarded from first use but, failing that, the first incident should have prompted a thorough review of the machine to identify what additional guarding was needed and appropriate action taken.”

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