



# SAFETY MATTERS

OCTOBER 2006

## FIRM FINED £20,000 AFTER YOUNG WORKER FATALITY

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A firm in has been fined £20,000 after a young employee was crushed to death. Barkston Plastics Forming, of Westhoughton, near Bolton, appeared last week before magistrates in Trafford following the death of Philip Ashcroft. It admitted failing to ensure the safety of an employee. In addition to its fine, the firm was also ordered to pay £5,100 costs. Father-of-one Mr Ashcroft, who had just celebrated his 22nd birthday, had been working inside a vacuum press machine on 4 September 2002, when it started up, trapping him inside. His best friend, Lee Edwards, battled for more than 20 minutes to free him and colleagues used a forklift truck to prize open the two metal plates that trapped his upper body. **The Health and Safety Executive told magistrates the company had a written safe system of work for the operation carried out by Mr Ashcroft. But HSE said this system was routinely not followed and that the machine was entered without being correctly isolated from a power source.** HSE added the system of work itself was not suitable for the task and did not follow published HSE guidelines. **The company had also failed to provide suitable training for managers and employees, and an effective supervisory and monitoring system was not implemented,** Trafford magistrates were told. HSE inspector Iain Evans said had written procedures been followed this 'would have gone some way to reduce the risk of injury. However it was still not sufficient to comply with HSE guidelines in that there would still have been power to the rest of the machine and potentially stored compressed air.' He added: **'The lack of risk perception through the organisation is a symptom of the lack of training delivered to both employees and managers who were working in this area.'**

### New Age legislation on 1 October

On October 1 2006, new laws will come into force to protect workers from age discrimination. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations will make it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees, trainees or job seekers because of their age and ensure that all workers, regardless of age, have the same rights in terms of training and promotion.

Employers will be required to revise their recruitment and retention policies, as they will no longer be allowed to use age as a consideration in employment, promotion or retirement decisions. They must also update their equality policy to include age, and all staff should be made aware of the implications of the regulations.

For further information please see -

[www.agepositive.gov.uk/newsDetail.cfm?sectionid=44&newsid=678](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk/newsDetail.cfm?sectionid=44&newsid=678)

**REMEMBER IF IT CANT BE DONE SAFELY— DON'T DO IT**

### TIME 2 ACT

- TAKE ADVICE
- INFORM
- MAKE AN EFFORT
- ENTHUSE & ENFORCE
- 2
- ACT NOW
- CONTROL RECORDS
- TRAIN YOUR STAFF



## NEW CONSTRUCTION (DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS

Construction remains a disproportionately dangerous industry where improvements in health and safety are urgently needed. The improvements require significant and permanent changes in duty holder attitudes and behaviour. Since CDM 94 was introduced in 1995, concerns have been raised that their complexity, and the bureaucratic approach of many duty holders, frustrate the Regulations' underlying health and safety objectives. These views were supported by an industry-wide consultation in 2002, resulting in HSC's decision to revise the Regulations.

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CDM 2007 offers an opportunity for a step change in health and safety performance and will be used to re-emphasise the health, safety and broader business benefits of a well-managed and coordinated approach to the management of health and safety in construction.

### WHAT CONSTRUCTION INSPECTORS WILL BE DOING

This year during the inspection campaign Inspectors from HSE's Construction Division will be focusing on manual handling tasks that mainly form part of the Supply Chain Initiative.

These are:

- Kerbs
- Building blocks
- Panel products e.g. plasterboard
- Use of lifting aids e.g. for lintels or drainage products (gully pots/manhole covers and frames)
- Bagged aggregate

### SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD AND BAD PRACTICE



The use of trolleys or manual handling aids will assist to prevention injuries and damage to materials.



Kerb laying – Not the way to do it!



Laying a long run of kerbs with a vacuum lifter - an example of good practice



## **RISK MANAGEMENT- ARE YOU TAKING THE SENSIBLE APPROACH**

### **Sensible Risk Management is about**

- Ensure Staff and Public are protected
- Enabling innovation and learning
- Ensure those creating risk take responsibility for managing risk
- Ensuring individuals understand that as well as the right to protection, they are required to exercise responsibility

### **It's Not About**

- Creating a totally risk free society
- Generating useless paperwork mountains
- Scaring people by exaggerating trivial risks
- Stopping important learning activities for individuals where the risks are managed

### **Reality Check**

Get Together

Be Aware

Think About the Real World

Take a Positive Approach

## **LONE WORKING**

We live in a 24-7 world. Care workers, shop workers, maintenance workers, most jobs, can require people to be left alone and isolated. It can be dangerous. Workers have been murdered. Health, postal, emergency and shop workers are frequently attacked. Injured workers have been undiscovered for hours. The law should protect you ... make sure it does.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says lone workers are "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision." Three broad groups of workers are at risk, those: Working alone on site; working away from base; and home workers.

There are no specific legal duties on employers in relation to lone working, however the general duty of employers to maintain safe working arrangements under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act applies.

## **PUBS 'HEALTHIER' AFTER SMOKE BAN**

The vast majority of bar staff in Scotland believe their workplaces are healthier since the March introduction of the smoking ban. The Cancer Research UK poll of 545 workers revealed that three-quarters thought the legislation would improve their health in the long term.

The survey results show that, in just six months, the people of Scotland are already reaping the health benefits of going smoke-free.' Cancer Research UK said bar workers who smoked were also positive about the health effects of the law. Almost 90 per cent reported a healthier work environment and 69 per cent said it would benefit their health in the long term.

Professor Alex Markham, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, said: 'Scotland should be proud of having moved so fast to embrace smoke-free legislation. While the rest of the UK plays catch up, Scotland has led the way in showing how to ensure a smoke-free future



## STRESS

HSE research in 2001/2 has revealed about five million workers in the UK experience stress and half a million believe it makes them ill, costing the nation £3.7 billion. The 2003 Stressed Out survey by the Samaritans, the UK emotional support charity, found: "People's jobs are the single biggest cause of stress... with over a third (36 per cent) of Briton's citing it as one of their biggest stressors."

Our hearts and minds can face intolerable pressures from work. Overwork, bullying, low job control and satisfaction, job insecurity, new ways of working, poor work organisation and pace of work can all cause work stress.

The mental symptoms of stress range from sleeplessness and listlessness through to clinical depression and suicide. The physical effects range from appetite loss and nausea through to heart damage and stroke.

A workplace with a lot of stress may suffer from high absenteeism, higher risk of accidents, industrial relations problems, demotivation and high labour turnover.

The HSE have produced Management Standards on how employers should tackle workplace stress. In the absence of specific legislation, these standards, based on the risk assessment approach, are seen as the most useful method of tackling stress in the workplace.

Should you think that you or an employee is suffering from Stress then report it to a member of your management team.

SME Training & Consultants Ltd can assist in Stress Awareness & Management Training.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Each Month we will be highlighting "Hot topics" from the Health & Safety profession that may affect your business.

Let us know your views either by email or write to us at the above address.

Any correspondence will be published in the next Newsletter

We're here to help YOU help yourselves !

## Dates For Your Diary:

### OCTOBER 2006

- 1 PREMISES FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED UNDER THE NEW - REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005
- 23-28 EUROPEAN HEALTH & SAFETY WEEK. LET US HELP YOU RAISE EMPLOYEES AWARENESS
- 18 FIRST AID APPOINTED PERSONS COURSE. GUARANTEE YOUR PLACE BOOK EARLY FOR PREFERENTIAL RATES

## OUR SPONSORS THIS MONTH



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