



Wilkins Safety Group

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.

Do you involve your workforce in Health & Safety issues?

People who feel valued and involved in decision making play a big part in a high performing workplace.

Communicating and consulting with your workforce and giving them the right knowledge and skills is not only a legal duty but also shows that you take their health, safety and well-being seriously.

Other key benefits include:

- lower accident rates;
- a more positive attitude towards health and safety;
- greater awareness of workplace risks; and
- better control of workplace risks.

This week's 2 recent HSE cases look at accidents that could have been avoided had the workforce been considered.

- **Murphys (Waste) Ltd** of Greenwich, SE London, was fined a total of £6,000 and ordered to pay £1,287 in costs after admitting two offences under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.
- **Paul Osmond**, of Hele, Exeter, broke his right arm and injured his left shoulder after falling through a skylight at a warehouse in Martock.

As ever, if you have a subject that you would like us to cover one week, please contact us by phone [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)
Email info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or via our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)

Tell employees about health and safety and they'll know about it. - *Involve them and they'll understand.*

Communicating and consulting with your workforce and giving them the right knowledge and skills is not only a legal duty but also shows that you take their health, safety and well-being seriously. **This step-by-step guide will show you how you can effectively and efficiently involve your workers in health and safety.**

Key points:

1. Follow each step to identify the stage you think you're at now.
2. Pick out the elements of the 'how you can do it' process that are relevant to you and your employees.
3. Work step-by-step through each of the stages.

It's a legal requirement for you to inform, instruct, train and consult with your workforce.

Informing

What do you need to do?

You must provide your employees with information on:

- your risk assessment, including the protective measures you've taken;
- how to deal with any potentially dangerous situations;
- your specific requirements for temporary or vulnerable workers, e.g. pregnant employees etc.;
- changes to workplace conditions or practices, e.g. weather-dependent or activities taking place in the surrounding area; and
- how to work safely when out and about or where the workplace changes frequently.



How can you do this?

There are various methods for different workplaces. Suggestions include:

- providing information during your workplace induction process;
- using images where possible;
- carrying out briefings with your workforce to take account of site conditions and pass on information about changes;
- using an interpreter and/or having information translated if necessary;
- involving your employees in all matters which affect their health and safety at work, e.g. risk assessments and operating procedures; and
- considering bite-sized information session where particular health and safety issues are discussed.

Instruction and training

The law says you must clearly instruct and train your employees in their duties and provide the necessary level of supervision.

Conduct training during working hours. It must not be paid for by employees.

Bear in mind that some workers may have particular needs – they may be new to the workplace or perhaps they are taking on extra responsibilities.

Keep records so you can see when training needs to be repeated.



Self-employed people and contractors will need to be given information and full clear instruction about the risks in the workplace. Make sure each self-employed person and contractors know who to talk to if they have concerns about health and safety. You may also need to provide training and supervision so that they can carry out their duties without putting themselves or your employees at risk.

How can you do it?

You need to show your commitment so that your employees recognise the importance of training. You may need to appoint someone competent to conduct the training for you such as [The Wilkins Safety Group](#).

Training can be delivered at locations suitable for your workers. Consider where the best and most convenient place is to communicate with your employees. This may be at a depot, warehouse, café or other destination.

Think about ways of sharing knowledge and awareness of issues through your sub-contractors or supply chains. This can be achieved by running site or depot awareness sessions on particular subjects.

Supervision is particularly vital when workers are new, inexperienced or young. Even more experienced workers can become complacent and take shortcuts.

Arranging representatives

By law, employers must consult all their employees on health and safety matters. You can choose to consult all workers individually or through representatives. For example, a non-unionised, small organisation, located on one small, low-risk site, is more likely to consult directly with employees on a day-to-day basis. You should allow the workers to elect a representative to act as a point of contact.

You should ensure that any representatives receive paid time off during normal working hours so they can carry out their duties. They should also receive suitable training and access to any facilities they need to help them in their role.

How can you do it?

Give your representative your full support. Facilities they might need access to include:

- a telephone/quiet area;
- the internet;
- storage space; and
- a photocopier and notice board.

If the nature of the work is such that employees are constantly on the move, you should consider the best way for them to communicate with their colleagues, e.g. a centrally located point for contact could be agreed.

If you don't have a representative arrange for someone to be chosen by your employees to go on the training course provided by [The Wilkins Safety Group](#)

Teamwork

Your representative should be looked upon as a 'critical friend'. This is someone who asks questions about practice or developments in supportive yet challenging ways.



What do you need to do?

You need to;

- provide your representative with enough information to allow full and effective participation;
- consult them on potential hazards and dangerous occurrences;
- include them when dealing with health and safety inspectors; and
- attend health and safety committee meetings.

Union representatives will also be involved with investigating incidents and complaints and workplace inspections. It is good practice to give non-unionised representatives the same functions as union reps. For example, involve reps in investigating incidents and complaints and by undertaking workplace inspections.

How can you do it?

There are several ways of achieving this. You could:

- try and consult regularly, even if it is informal and relate it to the actual tasks being carried out;
- arrange specific meetings for key issues such as high risk areas;
- propose changes to the workplace and health surveillance issues;
- include health and safety as part of other scheduled meetings.

Consulting

As employees are often the most aware of health and safety issues and solutions, it makes sense to listen to them. If your workers feel their ideas are valued, they will generally have a stronger commitment to tackling such problems.

What do you need to do?

Talk and listen. If, for example, there are new ways of working or new equipment is introduced into the workplace, you need to encourage employees to ask questions, raise concerns and make suggestions.

Make sure you respond to their concerns and explain why decisions have been taken.

How can you do it?

How you do it depends on your:

- business structure;
- management style;
- safety culture;
- diversity of workforce;
- employment structure, e.g. use of agency workers;
- work patterns, e.g. shifts etc.; and
- remote workers.

If consulting directly, you can use:

- walkabouts;
- tool box talks;
- face-to-face discussions;
- regular scheduled meetings; or
- workgroups to deal with specific issues.



Other ways could include:

- staff surveys;
- suggestion schemes;
- noticeboards;
- logging and responding to issues or concerns raised by staff; and
- staff bulletins to share information and good practice.

Joint problem solving

This will:

- improve health and safety standards;
- increase productivity, efficiency, quality and motivate the workforce; and
- boost co-operation and trust between workers and managers.

What do you need to do?

If you involve your employees and their representatives in tackling health and safety issues, you will be helping to create a genuine and valuable partnership. This will allow concerns and ideas to be freely shared and acted upon as the whole workforce aims for a healthier and safer environment.

Research shows that joint partnership working often leads to reduced accident rates.

Consider sharing knowledge through your business supply chains and other networks. Where conditions change regularly, it is helpful to share good practice with other contractors and peer groups. In some cases, agreeing minimum standards through industry networks can help to raise awareness and reduce accidents.

Other Benefits!

Learn how Murraywood reduced their insurance premiums by 50% - Watch this short the following short film

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/doyourbit/assets/videos/murraywood-case-study.mp4>

If you need further information please call us on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or send us an email at info@wilkinssafety.co.uk

Now to the latest HSE cases:

Machine neglect puts waste contractor in the dock



A waste firm has been fined £6,000 for failing to look after its heavy machinery properly.

Westminster Magistrates heard on 5th November that the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) had to serve Greenwich-based Murphys (Waste) Ltd with a total of 10 enforcement notices between 2009 and early 2014. The most serious breaches related to defects in machines which presented a 'risk of death or serious personal injury to employees and people on site'.

HSE told the court that the latest two failures, relating to a loading shovel and a

360 degree excavator, had finally prompted it to prosecute the serial offending company.

During an annual inspection by an engineer in October 2013, several defects were found with the loading shovel. The worst was extensive damage to the bolts fixing the front bucket to the machine, which could have led to the bucket falling off and crushing anyone nearby.

Murphys was advised not to use it until repairs were carried out but was later found to have kept it in use until a visit by HSE in January 2014, when a prohibition notice was served to stop any further use of the vehicle.

In a visit just days later, HSE saw that an excavator was being used with no left-side mirror or rear mirror in place, severely restricting driver visibility and thus posing a risk to other workers. HSE served a further prohibition notice on the company preventing its use.

The court was told that on top of these two breaches, the company had been inspected by HSE six times over five years resulting in eight enforcement notices. Two of these had related to defects on a shovel loader and one had required the firm to introduce a proper system for maintenance of the vehicles.

Murphys (Waste) Ltd of Horn Lane, Greenwich, SE London, was fined a total of £6,000 and ordered to pay £1,287 in costs after admitting two offences under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

After the hearing, HSE inspector John Crookes said:

"Murphys (Waste) has a dismal record of compliance with safety legislation and seemed to be content with repeatedly exposing its employees to unnecessary danger.

"This is a waste management company that takes bulk material from construction sites and uses heavy earthmoving plant. The risks associated with the waste industry are well-documented and widely recognised, but it is one of the most dangerous sectors.

"No company in the industry should be failing to address these risks and no worker should be regularly exposed to such uncontrolled dangers. All work vehicles and equipment must be kept in an efficient condition and in good state of repair."

Devon contractor fined following worker's fall

A collapsed building company in Devon has been fined £12,500 after a worker fell through an unguarded fragile roof light.

Philip Saunders Contractors Ltd in Tiverton, which is in liquidation, pleaded not guilty to breaching the Work at Height Regulations 2005 at Yeovil Magistrates' Court earlier this week (4 November 2014).

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted the business following an investigation into the incident, which took place on 31 January. Paul Osmond, of Hele, Exeter, broke his right arm and injured his left shoulder after falling through a skylight at a warehouse in Martock.



Yeovil Magistrates Court

Osmond and a colleague had been installing a new roof over the building's existing tin one. There had been no mention of fragile skylights before the work commenced.

HSE inspector James Lucas said:

"Although Mr Osmond's injuries have caused him a great deal of pain and discomfort, he was fortunate his injuries were not more serious or even fatal.

"This incident could easily have been prevented if the job had been planned properly and safety netting or scaffolding installed.

"Falls from height are the biggest cause of workplace deaths and it's crucial that employers make sure work sufficient measures are put in place to protect staff from the risks. There is no excuse for employers failing to safeguard workers who have to work at height."

As well as the fine, Philip Saunders Contractors was also ordered to pay costs of £2,850.



If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



Your Business is
Safer in Our Hands