



# Wilkins Safety Group

Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014

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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](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk) with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



We hope you had a good May bank holiday. This week we thought we would look at **Musculoskeletal disorders** and what you need to do to comply with the legislation.

We also look at a couple of recent HSE cases for you to consider. These look at:

- The case of worker who suffered a broken finger when her hand was dragged into **unguarded machinery**.
- A council that has been fined for serious safety failings after workers struck and **ruptured an underground gas pipe** releasing almost four tonnes of gas

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## Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) .....

Incorrect manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. It causes work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which account for over a third of all workplace injuries. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended in 2002 ('the Regulations') apply to a wide range of manual handling activities, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. The load may be either animate, such as a person or an animal, or inanimate, such as a box or a trolley.

## STATISTICS IN PERSPECTIVE: MANUAL HANDLING

IF EVERY PERSON IN THE  
**PACKED**  
OLYMPIC STADIUM  
REPRESENTED ONE MSD CASE, YOU'D  
HAVE TO FILL IT MORE THAN  
**SIX TIMES OVER**  
TO GET A FEEL FOR THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM



MSDS ACCOUNT FOR WORKING  
DAYS LOST EQUIVALENT TO  
**EVERY PERSON**  
IN ONE STADIUM TAKING  
**THREE MONTHS**  
**OFF WORK**

## ***I don't work in a manual job so this won't affect me will it?***

**Wrong** - Manual handling injuries can happen anywhere people are at work – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories, and while making deliveries. Heavy manual labour, awkward postures, manual materials handling, and previous or existing injury are all risk factors in developing MSDs.

There is more information and advice on MSDs on the Wilkins Safety Group website at [http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/manual\\_handling.pdf](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/pdf/whss/manual_handling.pdf)

Taking the action described here will help prevent these injuries and is likely to be cost effective. But you can't prevent all MSDs, so it is still essential to encourage early reporting of symptoms.

## ***What do I, as an employer, need to do about it?***

Consider the risks from manual handling to the health and safety of your employees. If there are risks, the Regulations apply.

**Consult and involve the workforce.** Your employees and their representatives know first-hand what the risks in the workplace are. They can probably offer practical solutions to controlling them.

The Regulations require employers to:

- **avoid** the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- **assess** the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided; and
- **reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.



## ***Avoid the need...***

Check whether you need to move it at all

For example:

- Does a large work piece really need to be moved, or can the activity (e.g. wrapping or machining) be done safely where the item already is?
- Can raw materials be delivered directly to their point of use? It saves man handling bulky loads around the workplace and so can save on time and money as well.

## ***Assessing the risks..***

As part of managing the health and safety of your business, you must control the risks in your workplace.

To do this you need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent harm. This process is known as a risk assessment and it is something you are required by law to carry out.

A risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace, not about creating huge amounts of paperwork. You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you should be doing more.

Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm.

So consider

**The tasks**, do they involve holding loads away from the body? Or twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? Do employees have to carry loads over long distances? Does it involve strenuous pushing or pulling?



**The loads**, are they: heavy or bulky? Difficult to grasp? Unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)? Harmful, eg sharp or hot? Awkwardly stacked? Too large for the handler to see over?

**The working environment**, are there: bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? Variations in floor levels? Hot/cold/humid conditions? Gusts of wind or other strong air movements? Poor lighting conditions? Restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)?

**Individual capacity**, does the job: Require unusual capability, e.g. above average strength or agility? Endanger those with a health problem or learning/physical disability? Endanger pregnant women? Call for special information or training?

## ***How far must I reduce the risk?***

To the acceptable level of *'so far as is reasonably practicable'*. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risk in terms of money, time and trouble.

## ***Do I have to provide mechanical aids in every case?***

You should definitely provide mechanical aids if it is reasonably practicable to do so and the risks identified in your risk assessment can be reduced or eliminated by this means. But you should consider mechanical aids in other situations as well – they can improve productivity as well as safety. Even something as simple as a sack truck can make a big improvement.

## ***What about training?***

Training is important but remember that, on its own, it can't overcome:

- a lack of mechanical aids;
- unsuitable loads;
- bad working conditions.

Training should cover:

- manual handling risk factors and how injuries can occur;
- how to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling technique;
- appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- use of mechanical aids;
- practical work to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely.

[The Wilkins Safety Group](#) can provide you and your workforce with Manual Handling training either on an open course or "In House" where we can look and train your staff in the manual handling risks that affect them. **For more information contact us on 01458 253682 or [info@wilkinssafety.co.uk](mailto:info@wilkinssafety.co.uk)**

## ***Leather manufacturer sentenced over worker's hand injury***



Picture is type of machine but NOT the one involved

**A company from Peterborough has been fined for safety failings after a worker suffered a broken finger when her hand was dragged into unguarded machinery.**

The 25 year-old woman from Poland, who does not wish to be named, was working for E-Leather Ltd at its manufacturing site at Sturrock Way when the incident happened on 30 October 2012. She subsequently required four months' treatment, but has now returned to work.

Peterborough Magistrates' Court was told today (30 April) that the worker was attempting to clear material from a leather buffing machine after noticing small holes appearing at regular intervals in the leather as it emerged from the out-feed.

After turning the machine off, the worker ran her hand along a powered feed roller to locate the cause. Being unable to do so, she then turned it back on to reverse the roller and, still not finding anything, restarted it with the roller in forward. The feed roller then pulled her fingers into a gap between the roller and the feed table trapping her right hand and breaking her index finger.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed there were no protective guards around the rotating parts of the machine. Furthermore, this was the second time the company had been prosecuted for machinery safety failings following a conviction in September 2010.

E-Leather Ltd of Kingsbury Centre, Sturrock Way, Peterborough, was fined £18,480 and ordered to pay costs of £1,144 after pleading guilty to a breach of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and a breach of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Following the case, HSE Inspector Graham Tompkins said:

***"E-Leather Ltd's inadequate understanding of risk has meant its workers were exposed to the dangerous moving parts of this machine. A simple guard would have prevented this worker's painful injury.***

***"E-Leather has been in court before for very similar safety breaches on its machines so the company was fully aware of the importance of safeguarding dangerous moving parts of machines. However they clearly did not learn from that previous conviction."***

**Information on machine safety can be found at [http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our\\_leaflets.html](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our_leaflets.html)**

## ***Council sentenced after lives of workers and the public put at risk.....***

**Fife Council has been fined for serious safety failings after workers struck and ruptured an underground gas pipe releasing almost four tonnes of gas.**

One hundred homes and businesses, as well as a primary school, were evacuated following the incident at the council's Milesmark Depot in Carnock Road, Dunfermline, on 11 June 2010.



Dunfermline Sheriff Court heard today (1 May) that although there were no casualties as a result of the incident, members of the public were put at risk of injury or death.

The court was told that drainage works were being carried out at the depot by the council's own employees. On the day of the incident the employees, who were not supervised, decided to excavate a new trench unaware a decision had been taken the day before not to dig in that particular area.

During the excavation, using a hand held power tool and mechanical digger, they exposed and disturbed whinstone dust, which is an indicator of the presence of gas or water pipes. In spite of this, they continued the excavation and the digger struck and ruptured a gas valve on a six-inch pressure main.

They immediately evacuated the area and reported the incident. The emergency services and Scottish Gas Networks were called to the scene and all properties in the area evacuated for five hours while the damage was repaired.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed various failings by the council including:

- **failure to assess the risks to members of the public near the depot;**
- **failure to provide and maintain a safe system of work for the excavation, which included failing to refer to utility plans showing the location of underground services and failing to use devices or hand tools to locate underground services;**
- **failure to provide the necessary information, instruction and supervision to the excavation works to ensure the health and safety of nearby members of the public.**

Fife Council, of Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, was fined £24,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Following the case, HSE Inspector Mac Young, said:

***“This incident was both entirely foreseeable and easily preventable. Fife Council’s failures all related to inadequate risk assessment, lack of safe systems of work and a breakdown principally of the supervision of those employees involved.*”**

“The risks attached to excavation works are well known and documented. Guidance states that hand held power tools and mechanical excavators are the main causes of danger and should not be used close to underground services.

“Thankfully, no-one was injured, nor was there any damage to property. That, however, is down more to luck than judgement.”

**Information about the risks of working near underground services can be found at:**

[http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our\\_leaflets.html](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk/advice/our_leaflets.html)

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For further information about health and safety in your industry, please go to <http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk>

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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](mailto:jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk)



Your Business is  
Safer in Our Hands