

Wilkins Safety Group



Weekly Update Newsletter

Welcome to this issue - Friday 21st February 2014 - of our Update Newsletter.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to colleagues and friends.

This week we thought we would give you a number of items:

- A reminder about the new Law poster,
- A report on the recent HSE construction site blitz,
- An update of First Aid training requirements, and
- And the sad story about how a young worker loses his leg

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Time is running out to update your law poster

Are you still displaying an old health and safety law poster? Don't forget, the life of the old 1999 version comes to an end on 5 April 2014.

After that date, employers must either give their staff a copy of a pocket card or leaflet – both of which are free to download from HSE's website. Or, if they prefer, they can display the newer version of the poster.

The poster and leaflet are available in a range of formats as part of HSE's commitment to make health and safety information more accessible.

Employers have a legal duty to display the poster in a prominent position in each workplace or to provide each worker with a copy of the leaflet.

You can download the free pocket card and leaflet, or buy the newer version of the poster at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawposter.htm>



New law poster (above), old law poster (right)

More than 1000 construction sites fail safety checks

Dangerous practices and poor standards were found at nearly half the building sites visited during a month-long safety drive by HSE.

The nationwide campaign saw inspectors visiting 2607 sites where refurbishment or repair work was taking place.

They found basic safety standards were not being met on 1105 sites. On 644 sites, practices were so poor that enforcement action was necessary to protect workers – with 539 prohibition notices served ordering dangerous activities to stop immediately and 414 improvement notices issued requiring standards to improve.



Inspectors intervened when they came across this unsafe construction site (above)

Heather Bryant, HSE's Chief Inspector of Construction, said: *'It is disappointing to find a significant number of sites falling below acceptable health and safety standards. The inspections revealed that poor practice often went hand in hand with a lack of understanding.'*

'Through initiatives like this we are able to tackle underlying issues before they become established and we will continue to work with the industry in an effort to drive up standards.'

'However, those who recklessly endanger the health and lives of their workforce can expect to face tough consequences.'

The numbers

2607 sites visited

1105 sites failed safety checks

644 sites saw immediate enforcement action being taken

539 prohibition notices served ordering dangerous activities to stop immediately

414 improvement notice issued requiring standards to improve

The top three problems

1. Failing to protect workers working at height
2. Exposure to harmful dust
3. Inadequate welfare facilities

First-aid training provider flexibility for businesses

Life has become a little less complicated for businesses of all sizes and sectors thanks to HSE's continuing efforts to reduce burdens.

Recent regulatory changes mean that HSE no longer has to approve first-aid training and qualifications so businesses now have more flexibility in how they manage first-aid training in the workplace.

Where an employer's needs assessment shows that trained first-aiders are required, they will now be able to choose a training provider as well as decide what level of training is necessary.

HSE has revised its guidance to the Regulations and has also produced information on selecting a first-aid training provider.

The guidance makes it clear that first-aid training is available from a wide range of providers including:

- those who choose to offer regulated qualifications (first-aid qualifications regulated by the qualification regulators - Ofqual, SQA and the Welsh Government);
- those who operate under voluntary approval schemes, for example a trade or industry body having quality assurance schemes accredited by a third party (eg UKAS);
- those who operate independently of any such scheme, for example where a training provider chooses to demonstrate their competence to an employer by providing evidence that they meet the criteria set by HSE; or
- from one of the Voluntary Aid Societies (St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and St Andrew's First Aid).



The Wilkins Safety Group's trainer Yvonne Attridge-Hall has been an HSE certificate holder for the last 6 years and will continue to follow all the requirements which the HSE criteria lays down.

Young worker loses leg

A 20-year-old worker had to have his left leg amputated when it was crushed between a tractor and a loading shovel bucket during the construction of a wind farm in Scotland



Gregor Steele, from Perthshire, was airlifted to hospital where he had a nine-hour operation in an attempt to save his leg. Sadly, despite a second operation, this proved unsuccessful and his leg was amputated above the knee on 10 September 2010.

An HSE investigation into the incident led to a prosecution of Gallagher Groundworks at Perth Sheriff Court. The court was told that the company failed to make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the work being carried out. They also failed to make sure that the machinery being used was appropriate for the work, was properly maintained and that safety equipment was fully operative.

Mr Steele had positioned the tractor to empty the bowser and used the handbrake on it. There was no parking brake, as this had been disabled by Gallagher Groundwork's mechanic around five months previously. As he stood between the tractor and the loading shovel, the tractor was dragged backwards by the weight of the bowser, pinning him between the two.

In addition, the bowser's drum brakes were in a poor state of repair and could not be fitted to the tractor because the connecting hose was missing.

Gallagher Groundworks of The Yard, Commissioner Street, Crieff, was fined £32 000 after pleading guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Mr Steele was unable to work for two years. He has since been fitted with a prosthetic limb and has returned to work for Gallaghers using an automatic tractor.

Following the case, HSE inspector Kerry Elliot said: 'This was an entirely avoidable incident and the failures by Gallagher Groundworks led directly to this life-changing injury sustained by a young man, aged just 20 at the time of the incident.

'The equipment was not suitable in combination for the work it was being put to and furthermore was poorly maintained with the parking lock actually being disabled rather than repaired.



'Mr Steele has finally been able to return to work but he will endure the after-effects of this incident for the rest of his life.'

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Have you visited our Facebook page yet or had a look at our Twitter or LinkedIn pages yet?



If you like the [Wilkins Safety Group 'Face book' page](#), then please take a few moments to click through to 'like it'. Or go one step further and share it with your contacts



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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



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