



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.

Risk assessments can be a '**pain in the neck**' for many companies; especially the smaller office based business, yet under law they must be completed to ensure the safety of staff and anyone else affected by your operations.

Obviously every Specialist Consultant will tell you that the complex matrix involved in deciding the Hazard danger level is very complicated and should only be completed by an 'expert health & safety person'.

We at [The Wilkins Safety Group](http://www.wilkinssafety.co.uk) do not agree with this and encourage the owners of smaller offices or office based businesses to undertake their own assessments [follow the guidance given in the [Management of Health & safety at work Regs - 5 step program](#)].

It might be necessary in larger organisations or those companies where they do not have the time to implement an effective health & safety system, to utilise the services of an external consultant. We will gladly assist with guidance and hands-on help in undertaking the necessary assessments and audits [makes good business sense].

This week's 2 recent HSE cases look at accidents where the risks hadn't been properly assessed.

Geoffrey Crow, 48, from Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, sustained fatal crush injuries in the incident at the former RAF Chenies site on 13 February 2012.

- **92-year-old Olga Llewellyn** was a resident at Brocastle Manor Care Home in Ewenny, Bridgend when she sustained fatal injuries falling from her bedroom window.

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](#)

Effective risk assessment!

The HSE Safety officials will take account of the results of the assessments when they carry out inspections - evidence that businesses have taken appropriate steps to manage workplace risk.

Suitable and Sufficient?

The Management of health & safety at work regulations 1999 detail the five steps necessary for undertaking risk assessments.

All Employers have to assess the risks to their Employees and any others that may be affected by their work activities.

A Risk Assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that suitable control measures can be put into place to prevent harm. The objective quite simply is to ensure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill due to work activities.

A recommended method of completing a Risk Assessment is given in the publication '**Risk assessment A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace**' issued by the HSE. The following procedure broadly follows the HSE's recommended methodology.

Hazard and Risk

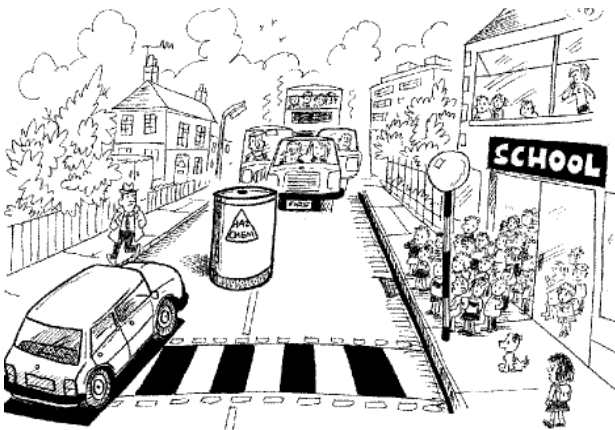
A HAZARD is Something with the potential to cause harm (substances or machines, methods of work and other aspects of work organisation).



Risk is the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised.

The extent of the risk covers the number of people affected and the consequences for them.

Therefore risk reflects both the likelihood and severity of the harm.



Look for the hazard

Decide which hazards are significant i.e. can cause serious injury or death. Examples of hazards include uneven floors, obstructions on floors such as cabling, which could result in slipping/tripping; badly stowed stock falling from shelves, hot/cold surfaces, leaking chemicals, electrical defects, hazardous substances such as acids, heavy boxes which must be lifted, defective ladders, poor lighting, ventilation or heating.

Decide who might be harmed and how

People who might be harmed include full or part-time employees, contractors, security personnel, cleaners, members of the public, etc.

Then think of ERIC

Eliminate

Can you eliminate the risk? For example if you have a delivery to your depot, can it be moved by a forklift truck, thereby eliminating any manual handling risk.

Reduce

If you are unable to eliminate the risk, you should see if you can reduce the risk. So, sticking with the manual handling of the delivery where you haven't got a forklift, can you break the load into smaller loads that can be easily carried?

Isolate

If the electrical power has been turned off to allow you to do work safely, it is essential that the power stays off until you have finished work. A good way is to have the only key to the switch or a locked room or cabinet containing the switch. Remember, if you remove a fuse, another one could be inserted in its place, and people ignore notices.



Control

Having decide on your approach to the risk, you need to control this approach. This includes looking at the individual capabilities of your workers, the provision and use of PPE, giving everyone involved the correct training and information. And monitoring the process to see that it all goes as planned.

Record the findings

Best practice dictates that all Risk Assessments are written down and recorded for future reference; this is mandatory where five or more people are employed. Risk Assessments can also be used as a guide to improving working practices.

Review the Assessment on a regular basis and revise it if necessary

A date should be set for the review of the assessment. The review must check that the precautions and controls for each hazard still adequately control the risk.





Employees must be made aware of any Risk Assessment and the control measures that affect them. Where necessary training or appropriate PPE will be given to obviate the risks identified. A plan should be prepared to eliminate any Hazards as far as reasonably practicable.

[The Wilkins Safety Group](#) can provide the necessary tools and assistance, including formatted Risk Assessment forms to assist you.

Quick guide provided by us for you to consider.

Although the main hazards experienced at work are normally in areas such as Fire, Electricity and Specialised Work equipment, [all covered by individual Risk Assessments]. A major cause of injuries are simple things such as Slips, Trips and Falls, bad posture whilst lifting weights [manual handling] and upper limb disorders caused by working at badly set out computer workstations [DSE Regs].

To help you complete a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment of your premises, we have highlighted some important areas for you to consider:

- **Ensure all work equipment is in good order** and free from hazardous conditions such as: - mounted on unsafe shelves or surfaces, sharp edges, hot/cold surfaces, excessive noise, unguarded moving parts, etc. In addition ensure that, where appropriate, the equipment is maintained and tested by a competent person at regular intervals as recommended by the manufacturer.
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- **Ensure that lighting is sufficient and adequate for the purpose.** A combination of natural and artificial lighting is preferred whenever possible. It is also important to ensure that Display Screen Equipment is used with low glare lighting.
 - **Emergency lighting** [tested as required by a competent person] is often essential to assist evacuation in the event of normal light failure.
 - **The premises should be heated** to a reasonable minimum temperature, 13-16 degrees C where manual work is carried out; offices generally require a higher temperature 18-20 degrees within one hour of work starting, [there is currently no upper limit]. The heating system should be regularly maintained and tested to ensure it is safe and does not emit offensive or hazardous fumes. A thermometer should be located in an easily visible location.
 - **Whenever possible the premises should be ventilated** by fresh air or by suitable mechanical means. Poor ventilation will lead to temperature and humidity problems that can result in uncomfortable and unhealthy working conditions.
 - **All passageways, exits and stairs should be free from obstruction** and allow free access/egress to public areas. Floors should also be checked for uneven surfaces, trailing electrical cables and any other objects that could cause an accident or injury. It is also important to ensure exit routes are clearly marked and handrails are provided on all stairs.
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- **Ensure employees have sufficient workspace** and there is no overcrowding.
 - **All open shelves and cupboard shelves should be strong enough**, not overloaded and suitable for the purpose. Filing cabinets should be fitted with an anti-tilt mechanism and a device to allow only one drawer at a time to be opened.
 - **Ensure that there are sufficient and suitable rest areas away from the work areas.**
 - **Drinking water should come from either a mains supply or bottled water.** It is also important to ensure that if drinking water is taken from the mains supply, it is not contaminated with lead from old service pipes. In premises where stored water is available the tap for drinking water should be labelled as such.
 - **Any work equipment that emits heat or other potential hazards e.g. photocopier, should be situated in a well-ventilated area** to prevent build-up of hazards such as ozone. Equipment of this nature should never be situated in a small confined room with little or no ventilation.

- **Any spillage should be cleaned up immediately.** If a hazardous substance is spilled, special spill procedures with the appropriate PPE must be used, together with special spill kits if appropriate. Care should be taken that the waste materials are disposed of properly.
- **All electrical appliances** such as work tools such as drills and saws, but also appliances such as microwave ovens, kettles, toasters and vacuum cleaners should be tested on a regular basis by a competent electrical person. Frequently used electrical equipment should be visually inspected before use.
- **Where possible separate toilets should be provided for male and female employees.** If only one toilet is available it must be lockable from the inside. Hot and cold running water and hand cleanser should be provided, together with suitable drying material or equipment.
- **Showerheads and taps** should be regularly cleaned and disinfected to prevent the spread of Legionella. They must also be flushed 3 times a week if not being regularly used. **For Example: in schools during holiday periods or holiday camps in the closed months.**



- **Ensure the no-smoking policy** is adhered to, in order to reduce the risk of fire.
- **All visitors to the premises should be signed in** and escorted to a safe reception/public area via a safe route to await their appointment. Where applicable the Company Safety Policy and Rules for Visitors should be made available to them.
- **If there is a threat of violence to employees,** ensure that they are aware of the Company's Violence Policy.
- **All employees must be familiar with the Company's Health and Safety Policy** and procedures. Employees must receive suitable and sufficient training to ensure their safety and well-being at work.



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:

Property developer and builder in court over death at construction site



A Middlesex property development firm and a Buckinghamshire contractor have been ordered to pay a total of over £180,000 for safety failings after a worker was killed whilst driving a dumper truck during construction works at a former military base in Buckinghamshire.

Geoffrey Crow, 48, from Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, sustained fatal crush injuries in the incident at the former RAF Chenies site on 13 February 2012. The dumper fell into a deep and completely unguarded excavation, overturned and landed directly on top of him. He was killed instantly by the five-tonne machine.

Harrow-based Lois Gastoneaux Ltd and Michael Brett, a self-employed contractor working on the site at the time, were sentenced today (20 November) after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identified serious safety breaches in their operations.

St Albans Crown Court heard that Mr Crow, known to his friends as 'Geoff', was working at ground level whilst others were working to excavate a deep basement for a swimming pool at a new build property belonging to the sole director of Lois Gastoneaux Ltd, Mr Kevin Andrews.

The dumper went into the large excavation, which was up to 6.5 metres deep, shortly after he had freed the vehicle when it became stuck near the unguarded edge.

The HSE investigation found that despite operations being underway for some three weeks at the site, there were no measures in place to prevent people or vehicles falling into the excavation, or to prevent any collapse of the excavation faces onto those working below ground.

Additionally none of the workers on site, five including Mr Crow, were used to operating plant machinery, such as excavators and dumpers, as large as those they were asked to use here. Neither did they have relevant construction experience despite being tasked with digging such a large excavation.

The seat belt on the machine Mr Crow was driving was not operational at the time of the incident, and his colleagues also stated they would not usually wear seatbelts when operating the machines.

The court was told the range of issues were all contributory factors in the death, and that standards at the site fell well below those expected.

Lois Gastoneaux Ltd, from Harrow, Middlesex, was fined £150,000 and ordered to pay £28,033 in costs after pleading guilty to / being found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulations 37(6) and 31(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Michael Brett, of Lodge Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £1,500 in costs after pleading guilty to / being found guilty of breaching Regulation 37(6) and Regulation 31(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Speaking after sentencing HSE Inspector Stephen Manley, said:

“Working with construction plant can be extremely dangerous, which is why appropriate safety measures must be in place at all times to protect workers and others onsite.

“In this instance, Mr Crow died as a direct consequence of the lack of controls of the risks involved in the excavation operations. There was no protection whatsoever to ensure workers, whether driving machinery or otherwise, did not fall into the deep excavation.

“A number of people were at work with Mr Crow and they were all at risk of serious harm through the absence of physical controls, as well as poor maintenance of equipment and a lack of training and information provided to workers.

“There are clear industry standards setting out how to identify and manage risks, and guidance is widely available. So there is no excuse to let operations continue without having the proper health and safety measures in place.”

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Welsh care home fined following elderly resident's death

A care home company failed to ensure an elderly resident's safety when she managed to overcome a restrictor device to open a window and fall from her first floor room.

The care home owner, Hafod Care Association Ltd, was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) today (19 November) at Cardiff Crown Court following the incident on 5 November 2010.

The court heard that 92-year-old Olga Llewellyn was a resident at Brocastle Manor Care Home in Ewenny, Bridgend when she sustained fatal injuries falling from her bedroom window between 4am and 7am. Her body was found by care home staff.



An investigation by HSE found that all the windows in Brocastle, were fitted with the same type of window restrictors, which were unsuitable for use in a care home because they could be easily over-ridden, so that the window could open wide.

Hafod Care Association Ltd, of Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff, pleaded guilty to one charge under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £96,000 and ordered to pay £100,000 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Janet Viney, said:

“This tragic incident could easily have been avoided if Hafod Care had fitted suitable window restrictors. The care home had been open for more than two years and although window restrictors were fitted, they were unsuitable because they could be easily over-ridden.

“Falls from windows are a very well known risk in the health and care sectors. For example between 2005 and 2010 there were 21 fatal accidents from this cause across the UK.

“It is therefore essential that care homes take measures to ensure vulnerable residents are kept safe. They should carry out a risk assessment and where it identifies that individuals are at risk from falls from windows then adequate restrictors should be fitted.

“These should restrict the opening to 100mm, be robust and not able to be over-ridden without the use of a specialist tool or key. In this case the risks were particularly high because of the very low (650mm) window sill height, which would allow someone to accidentally fall from the window when opening or closing it.”

Further information on the risks of falling from windows for the health and social care sector can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/falls-windows.htm>

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Remember

Unlike other organisations who send out newsletters giving you a little 'titbit' of information, then stating that if you want to follow the full link or read the full story or get more information you must pay to subscribe to their service.

- Our newsletter service is FREE,
- the links we supply are FREE,
- the helpline advice is FREE.

If you find this newsletter service of use and you think others might also find it useful, then kindly pass it on and ask them to subscribe for free, so they can continue to receive it in their own right.

Also contact us if you have a particular health and safety subject or question you would like covered



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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