

Construction Newsletter

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Construction Safety Solutions Ltd

Chair's Blog

HSE's interim chair George Brechin gives a personal perspective on some of the big issues in health and safety.

A healthy outlook...

I always looked forward to reading Dame Judith Hackitt's 'Chair's Blog'. Now, as Interim Chair, I'm writing one myself.

It would be wrong to start without thanking Judith. In her eight and a half years as Chair, she drove change not just within HSE but in the world of work as well. Her focus on ensuring regulation protected the workforce and supported good and efficient business has been recognised at home and abroad. We heard Judith's voice coming through in her blog, and if you haven't already I encourage you to read her previous posts, which are available on the website.

This particular blog, given my NHS background, is about health.

Each year more than one million people in Great Britain report suffering from a health condition related to their work activity, and around 13,000 people die from past exposures to harmful substances at work.

In January, hundreds of people from across industry, the voluntary sector, trade unions and fellow regulators joined the Helping Great Britain work well engagement events held across England, Scotland and Wales. As a participant, I was hugely impressed by the commitment and determination to make what is already one of the world's best health and safety records even better.

One of the six key strategy themes that took front and centre in discussions was the pledge to highlight and tackle the burden of work-related ill-health. All too often organisations focus on safety while health takes the back seat. Both are important, but I want to turn up the volume on health, without reducing it on safety.

More than anything, I'd like to see businesses and organisations, large and small, recognise the costs associated with ill health from factors at work and the importance of focusing on early prevention. I'll be doing my utmost to ensure we at HSE can support and enable them to do this.

Our ambition must focus on the reduction in the incidence of occupational disease, which includes conditions ranging from cancer and other long-latency diseases to stress and musculoskeletal disorders.

The importance of health at work needs to be part of the dialogue we all have as stakeholders committed to helping Great Britain work well. It affects all of us - welders and bakers, hairdressers and health professionals, hospitality and construction workers.

We have already developed some really successful partnerships to deliver the substantial change in behaviour that will be required. To name just two, I recommend taking the time to read about the Occupational health provision for the London Olympics and the partnership work on reducing occupational asthma outlined in the Helping Great Britain work well strategy document.

Tackling work-related ill health is a big task with no single solution. The more we realise that there are things we can do which will make a difference, the more chance there is of making the progress needed. And we need to make progress, not least for the sake of those at risk.

Company Fined after Worker is Fatally Crushed in Trench

A company has been fined £2.6 million after an employee was killed when the trench he was working in collapsed on him in Lancashire.

James Sim, a 32-year-old worker, from Barry, South Wales, a sub-contractor working on behalf of Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited. On the 14 April 2010, Mr Sim was working in a trench, laying ducting for new cable for an offshore windfarm that was being built off the coast by Heysham, Lancashire.

The trench was dug to a depth of 2.4 metres, without any shoring. Mr Sim was killed when he became trapped in the trench after it collapsed on him.

Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited pleaded guilty at Preston Crown Court today after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Court heard that Balfour Beatty failed to adequately risk assess the works or control the way in which the excavation took place.

HSE inspector Chris Hatton said after the hearing: "The level of this fine should serve as a warning to industry not to ignore health and safety matters.

"Balfour Beatty failed to adequately assess, plan and supervise the work being undertaken. Trench collapses are easy to prevent, and it is disappointing that James' life was lost in such a tragic way. "The family has shown great patience and support throughout this investigation which is a credit to both them and James' memory."

Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions Limited, of Park Square Newton, Chambers Road, Chapeltown, Sheffield pleaded guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Regulation 31(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and Regulation 3(1)(a) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and was fined £2.6million with £54,000 costs.

CDM 2015 and its Application to the Entertainment Industry

What you should know

CDM 2015 is not about creating unnecessary bureaucracy. It is about securing the health, safety and welfare of those carrying out construction work and protecting others who the work may affect, from harm. With this principle in mind, this guidance illustrates how CDM roles and duties can be applied to existing common management arrangements and processes in the four main industry sub-sectors:

- TV/film and broadcasting
- Theatre and performing arts
- Live events (festivals, music, sport, cultural events)
- Exhibitions/trade fairs and conferences

This will also help others in the industry, with different management arrangements, to determine what they need to do to comply with CDM.

Worked examples for typical construction projects in the event/production industry have been included, to show what proportionate compliance with CDM 2015 might look like in practise. This guidance should be read in conjunction with HSE's L153: Managing health and safety in construction.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) apply to all construction projects, including those undertaken in the entertainment industry. A project includes all the planning, design and management tasks associated with construction work. For example, the building, fitting out and taking down of temporary structures for TV, film and theatre productions and live events.

CDM 2015 makes the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 more specific. They complement the general Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and integrate health and safety into the management of construction projects.

The aim is for construction health and safety considerations to be treated as a normal part of an event/production's management and development, not an afterthought or bolt-on extra. In concert with wider measures taken to ensure a safer event/production, the objective of CDM 2015 is to reduce the risk of harm to those that have to build, fit out, use, maintain and take down structures.

The key principles of CDM 2015 will be familiar to those already managing risks effectively as part of an event/production. The key principles are:

- eliminate or control risks so far as reasonably practicable;
(This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk)
- ensure work is effectively planned;
- appointing the right people and organisations at the right time;
- making sure everyone has the information, instruction, training and supervision they need to carry out their jobs safely and without damaging health;
- have systems in place to help parties cooperate and communicate with each other and coordinate their work; and
- consult workers with a view to securing effective health, safety and welfare measures.
- Any actions you take to comply with CDM 2015 should always be proportionate to the risks involved.

Find out more

- CDM roles and duties (in the context of the Entertainment Industry)
- Assigning CDM roles and duties to existing common management arrangements in the entertainment industry
- Planning, managing and coordinating construction work before and during the build and the breakdown of a show
- Pre-construction information
- Health and safety file and Construction Phase Plan (Entertainment Industry)

Worker Loses Life after Fall from Roof

A Birmingham maintenance company has been fined after a worker died as a result of falling from the roof of a five-storey building.

Birmingham Crown Court heard how H2O Plumbing Services Limited were contracted to carry out repairs to two motor rooms situated on the roof of a building on Hagley Road, Birmingham. Two workers set up a station immediately outside of a protected area in which to mix some mortar due to lack of space. The mixing station consisted of a tarpaulin sheet placed on top of the roof with a plasterer's bath placed on top. The corners of the tarpaulin sheet were weighted down with bags of rubble.

At the end of the working day, the employees were cleaning up and as they moved the mixing bath, the sheet of tarpaulin blew open due to the wind and landed over the edge of the building. As one of the workers attempted to retrieve the sheet he stepped off the side of the building, falling 14 metres, suffering fatal injuries. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident which occurred on 10 October 2014 found that H2O Plumbing Services Limited failed to ensure the safety of its employees during the external repair work.

After the incident, HSE Inspector Amy Kalay commented: "This incident was obviously foreseeable. The employees of H2O working at the site were effectively left to their own devices with equipment and a system that was not wholly suited for the task at hand. "A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk, suitable planning, implementation of suitable control measures and adequate and effective site supervision would have prevented this incident from occurring."

H2O Plumbing Services Limited, of Lee Trading Estate, College Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £25,000.

Improving Lives, Business and Society with 'The Human Connection' By Lauren Applebey

The collective works of ergonomists and human factors specialists across the UK has been published following the Ergonomics & Human Factors Conference 2016. A compilation of 29 thought-provoking case studies from a multitude of industries, 'The Human Connection' from The Chartered Institute of Ergonomics & Human Factors showcases the very latest projects in people-led design.

Led by the CIEHF's outgoing president, Professor Sarah Sharples, the publication demonstrates the innovation and diversity across the profession, and the numerous ways it touches people's everyday lives.

Professor Andrew McNaughton, Technical Director, HS2 Ltd said: "I'm delighted to see this document which highlights the extremely valuable contribution made by human factors professionals within a wide range of industrial settings. I'm personally aware from my work within the rail industry of the positive impact that systematic human factors activities can have on the workplaces of rail employees and the experience of rail passengers."

Ergonomists and human factors specialists have been at the heart of changes to safety critical systems, resulting in accidents being avoided and lives being saved. From the latest armoured vehicle design, and assessing workload in the rail industry, to designing for patient safety and safer neonatal care, each project is centred upon the way people interact and behave with the world around them, to design systems, technologies and processes that make our lives safer and more enjoyable.

Professor Sarah Sharples, CIEHF President 2015-16: "This document is intended to be of value to a wide range of audiences, including government, policy makers, industry, third sector groups, educators, research funders, regulatory bodies and collaborators. Ultimately we hope that this will become a document that we can all use to help to understand the complexity, range and value of the discipline of ergonomics and human factors."

The range and diversity of applications of ergonomics and human factors is immense. In aviation, the adoption of a human factors approach has changed the design of flightdecks and aircraft interiors. For many years, the high-hazard industries have recognised the importance of minimising the risk from human error. The nuclear sector has led the way in understanding, measuring and improving reliability, and UK nuclear regulation is seen by many as the gold standard.

In healthcare, ergonomists and human factors specialists work in partnership with clinicians, managers and IT specialists to contribute towards a safe and resilient 21st century healthcare system. Much focus has been placed on improving communication between clinicians, ensuring that teams of doctors and nurses work together to make effective decisions and reduce the likelihood of harm. In addition to this important work, many pieces of equipment that we find in a clinical setting, from ambulances, to drips that deliver life-saving drugs, have been developed and evaluated by human factors experts.

Stephen Barraclough said "We have such a wealth of experience amongst our membership that I believe can change our systems, processes and the way we interact with the world around us for the better. The Human Connection takes a slice of this innovation to demonstrate the capabilities within the profession to make our lives safer, more efficient, and ultimately, more enjoyable."