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IN FOCUS

HSE Crackdown on Moving Materials

Site managers and workers should be aware that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will be carrying out inspections and cracking down on the proper moving and handling of materials on site (manual and mechanical handling) in September and October this year.

HSE officials will be looking for evidence of both employers and workers having an understanding of the risks and control measures in place for moving materials.

This is due to an average of 42,000 construction workers reporting suffering from a work related musculoskeletal disorder, which often results in aches, pains and discomfort in joints, muscles and bones.

This comes after the site visits the HSE conducted in June and July on harmful dust on site.



Principal Designers - How well do they do?

The Principal Designer (PD) role was introduced when the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations were updated in 2015. The PD on a project has responsibility for coordinating health and safety during the pre-construction phase of a project. PDs must plan, manage, monitor and coordinate health and safety in the design phase of a project.

A PD **must** be appointed on all construction projects involving more than one contractor, including subcontractors.

PDs must be able to demonstrate that they have the health and safety skills, training, knowledge, experience and organisation capability to take on the role, and should only accept appoint as PD on a project if these can be demonstrated.

To gain more insight and to help understand how the PD role is working in practice, The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) commissioned consultants to carry out a review of the PD role and how it is working in practice.

The study found some interesting things that are eye opening to not only those who carry out the PD role, but anyone involved in a construction project:

The study found some of the following things:

- PDs are typically small or medium enterprises (SMEs) with self-employment or organisations employing less than 10 staff the most common. More PD organisations fulfil a health and safety role than a design one.
- 62% of PDs are appointed at the concept design stage, with 27% appointed after this when many key decisions have been taken
- Nearly three quarters of those asked felt that the PD in a project understood the role and ensured that health and safety is an integral part of the design.
- Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) of those asked agreed that the PD carries out their duty to liaise with other designers involved in a project, however, this dropped to 38% when it comes to liaising with other designers during temporary works which shows this area may need improvement.
- 66% of those asked agreed that the PD on a project holds design review meetings and 68% agreed they had a process to consider and resolve the issues raised.

- 71% agreed that the PD made sure that the client was aware of the importance of pre-construction information
- 68% agreed that the PD had identified the need for the Principal Contractor on a project to have the right information at the right time, though only 40% agreed that PDs interacted with temporary works designers.

The study showed that PDs are doing well on projects and the PD role is considered a success in many areas. These are:

- Early consideration of health and safety in the design phase.
- Better coordination and communication between different teams/dutyholders.
- Improved integration of safety and design.
- More understanding/awareness of design risks.
- Improved project information.

However, there were also some issues highlighted as needing improvement on the PD side where more focus is needed. These included:

- There is a need for more designer led risk management.
- The current understanding of the PD role isn't always sufficient
- Some PDs are not empowered or given the authority to undertake the role and may not be 'in control' of the pre-construction phase.
- Contracts and procurement routes influence how the PD role is undertaken.
- Some organisations are more willing to take the PD role than others
- The PD role is perceived by some to be a low value role.
- The potential value of BIM is only being realised on some projects.

You can view the full report [here](#).

The PD role can be complicated and confusing, however, at Safescope, we intend to make this easy to understand and can provide PD training and also take on the PD role ourselves.

Please do not hesitate to get in contact with us with any PD or CDM related queries.

You can also [click here](#) for more guidance on a PD's role and responsibilities.

HSE Data shows increase in construction deaths

Britain's construction sector recorded 45 fatalities during 2022/23, up from 29 the previous year which has been reported by the HSE.

The three most common causes of fatal accidents across all industries were falls from height, being struck by a moving object and being struck by a moving vehicle.

33 of the total deaths recorded during this period were workers aged 60 and over, 99 were workers aged 16 to 59 and 3 of an unknown age.

IN COURT

* A construction company has been fined £16,000 and ordered to pay £4,462.59 in costs after a man was critically injured falling 10m through the roof of an industrial unit. The roof was known to be fragile and, at the time of the incident, safety nets were being erected below the work area, although this work had not been completed. The man fell head first through a weak skylight on to the concrete below, shattering most of the bones in his face, hands and wrists. He lost 4 teeth and severely damaged his knee. He spent 6 weeks in intensive care and was confined to a wheelchair for 5 months. Since the accident he has endured constant pain and 17 months later is still unable to work—he will never be able to return to his former profession.



* A construction company has been fined £90,000 after exposing people to asbestos during a renovation project. The company failed to attend court however was found guilty in its absence. Significant amounts of asbestos containing debris was found to the front and rear of the building, as well as along the public highway.

* A self-employed plumber has received a suspended prison sentence after carrying out unsafe gas work and for pretending to be Gas Safe registered. He falsely presented himself as a Gas Safe registered engineer to customers and did not carry out the work to appropriate standards, leaving residents at risk from unsafe gas appliances. He was handed a six-month custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months and ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work and pay £5,000 in costs.

* A company director has been fined after obstructing HSE investigation. The HSE visited a timber frame house development under construction by the company and found failings including the presence of an open flame gas stove amongst large volumes of combustible material, a lack of fire precautions, poor site security and inadequate washing facilities. The company had also failed to assess the on and off-site fire risks, despite it being a timber-frame project in a highly residential area. During the investigation the director deliberately obstructed the inspector by refusing to provide information requested as part of the enquiries. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,587 and the director was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,935.

Substandard Roofing Battens on the rise

Amid the high demand for treated timber, compounded by shortages created by the conflict in Ukraine, Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, large quantities of substandard roofing battens in the UK market are being marked, coloured and sold as conforming to BS 5534 (the code of practice for slating and tiling). The safety concern was highlighted by the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) members, as these inferior battens present an increasingly serious issue for roof safety. Not only do they affect the longevity of the roof, they are less able to support an operative using the battens as a roof ladder alternative.

What to look out for:

1. Check the thickness of the batten—a roofing batten less than 25mm thick should not be used.
2. Check for knots - if a knot is visible on both sides of the batten, when added together the overall size should be no more than 35mm or 50mm (the width of the batten).
3. Do not rely on colour of a roofing batten to guarantee compliance.
4. If you see signs of rot, decay or growth on a batten do not use it—BS 5534 graded battens should not rot.
5. All roofing battens that are compliant with and graded to the requirements of BS 5534 should be delivered to site with the correct paperwork.

Too clean?

Good housekeeping standards on site are incredibly important—slip, trips and falls remain one of the biggest causes of injury on site, injuring over 180,000 employees and costing employers over £500 million. What you may be unaware of is, other than keeping walkways clear, avoiding trailing cables, clearing up spillages etc. there are other ways to avoid slip, trip and fall accidents on site. Some of the contributing causes of slip, trips and falls at work include:

- The floor maintenance and cleaning regime—too much can cause the floor to become slippery and may lead to the opposite effect.
- Contaminants getting onto the floor surface or footwear.
- The range of floor types.
- Floors degrading over time.

A risk assessment of the working environment for slips, trips and falls may differ on every site and it's important to be aware that, whilst maintaining good housekeeping is paramount to preventing slips, trips and falls, taking cleaning measures too far can also cause more problems than solutions.

RIDDOR Reportable? Who and when do I need to submit a report

If a serious incident or death has occurred in the workplace, this may need to be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

The RIDDOR regulations specify particularly injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences that must be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive if they occur on site.

Not all accidents and incidents will need to be reported to the HSE, however it is important to realise that if an incident is classed as RIDDOR reportable and it is isn't reported, this could lead to punishment later down the line in the form of fines or even imprisonment which is why it is vitally important that when an incident is reportable under RIDDOR, it is reported as soon as the incident is required to be.

The death of any person including workers and non-workers, with the exception of suicides, must be reported if they arise from a work-related accident, including the act of physical violence to a worker.

The "specified" injuries are injuries that, when they occur at work, must be reported under the RIDDOR regulations. These include:

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes.
- Amputations
- Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- Serious burns (including scalding) which: covers more than 10% of the body or causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- Any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which: leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

As well as the above specified injuries, there are also other reasons you may need to report an accident under the RIDDOR regulations:

- If a worker has **any injury** that results from an accident at work that means they are away from work for more than 7 days due to not being able to perform their normal work duties must be reported. This report must be made within 15 days of the accident.
- If a worker is **incapacitated for more than 3 days**—this must be recorded in an accident book.
- If **a member of the public or someone not working on the site is injured** this must be reported under RIDDOR if this results in an injury requiring hospital treatment. However, there is no need to report incidents where someone has been taken to hospital as a precaution and no injury is apparent.

As well as injuries, the following occupational diseases must be recorded if they have been caused or made worse at work:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Severe cramp of the hand or forearm
- Occupational dermatitis
- Hand-arm vibration syndrome
- Occupational asthma
- Tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm
- Any occupational cancer
- Any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent



As well as injuries and diseases, the other part that makes up the RIDDOR regulations is dangerous occurrences.

Dangerous occurrences are certain, specified near-miss events. Not all such events require reporting, however, there are 27 categories of dangerous occurrences that are relevant to most workplaces which could include:

- The collapse, overturning or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts and lifting equipment.
- Plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines.
- The accidental release of any substance which could cause injury to any person

Additional categories of dangerous occurrences apply to mines, quarries, offshore workplaces and relevant transport systems (railways etc).

In addition to the above, distributors, fillers, importers & suppliers of flammable gas must report incidents where someone has died, lost consciousness, or been taken to hospital for treatment due to an injury arising in connection with that gas.

Registered gas engineers (under the Gas Safe Register), must provide details of any gas appliances or fittings that they consider to be dangerous, to such an extent that people could die, lose consciousness or require hospital treatment. The danger could be due to the design, construction, installation, modification or servicing of an appliance or fitting which could cause:

- An accidental leakage of gas
- Incomplete combustion of gas or
- Inadequate removal of products of the combustion of gas

We often get asked who should report an incident to RIDDOR, and the answer is anyone who is classed as a responsible person for whoever is injured.

Ideally, this is normally the injured persons employer, but could also include a Principal Contractor involved in a project if they are in control of the premises where the incident occurred.

In the case of self employed workers working on a wider site, the person in control of the premises (Principal Contractor) will be responsible for reporting a RIDDOR reportable incident to the HSE.

In the case of agency workers, the employment agency is the legal employer and is under the same legal obligations as any other employer to report accidents and ill health of anyone who comes through them.

It is important to stress that if RIDDOR reportable incidents aren't reported, whoever is in control of the premises may end up getting prosecuted by the HSE so it is in the best interest of the control of premises to ensure that any incidents are reported to the HSE when they need to be, as anyone who is responsible for the injured person can report a RIDDOR reportable incident to the HSE.

RIDDOR reports can be submitted online on the HSE website and when you go to the website, you will be asked to choose whether you are reporting an injury, dangerous occurrence, case of disease, flammable gas incident or report a dangerous gas fitting.

The link to report a RIDDOR reportable incident can be found by [clicking here](#).

The HSE prefer that reports are submitted online but a telephone service is also provided for reporting fatal/specified incidents **only**. The Incident Contact Centre can be contacted on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm).

If you need any help or advice with an incident that you believe may be RIDDOR reportable, please don't hesitate to give us a call on 01473 407020 or an email at contact@safescope.com and we would be happy to assist.

