

BRUNSWICKS' REGULATORY NEWS IN THE COURTS OR UNDER INVESTIGATION:

BROMBOROUGH CHEMICAL FIRM FINED £20,000 AFTER TWO EXPLOSIONS

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Wirral chemical company Epichem Ltd was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £13,416.28 costs at Wirral Magistrates' Court in Birkenhead after pleading guilty to a breach of its s2 HSWA duty owed to its employees. The charge was brought by the HSE following two explosions at the company's premises in Bromborough on 7 December 2004.

One employee, Paul Evans was severely injured, and a second man received minor injuries. The company's premises were badly damaged.

HSE Inspector Dr Jo-Anne Michael who oversaw the HSE investigation of the incident said:

"Guidance for the assessment of chemical reaction hazards is readily available to industry and HSE expects that high standards of design,

construction, operation and maintenance to be maintained at all times. Before any modifications are made to a process, the effect on the overall process safety should be assessed prior to their instigation and the process documentation should be updated accordingly".

The first explosion occurred in Epichem's gallium chloride solvation reactor, causing the release of flammable materials into the plant area where a secondary explosion occurred.

The explosions were caused by an uncontrolled exothermic reaction (severe over heating) during a chemical process.

Wirral Magistrates Court

Maximum penalty for this offence in this court— unlimited fine

TAXI PASSENGER DEATH PUTS HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL IN THE DOCK WITH TWO OTHERS

The HSE has announced that it will prosecute Hartlepool Borough Council, Mr Ian Cameron (trading as Cameron Radio Taxis) of Mainsforth Terrace, Hartlepool and Mr Gerald Nicholson of Blakelock Road, Hartlepool, in connection with the death of Mr James Hunt.

On 19 January 2005, Mr Hunt, who was 85 years old, fell from the tail lift of a Dial-a-Ride vehicle whilst disembarking

on his motorised scooter at a supermarket in Clarence Road, Hartlepool.

Each face a criminal charge for a breach of Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. HSE allege that each party failed in its duty to ensure the safety of Mr Hunt whilst using the Dial-a-Ride service.

The preliminary date for the first hearing is 28 February 2007.

FAILURE TO SEGREGATE VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS AT WORK HAS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Mr Roy Howard Moore, 53 of Ripley, Derbyshire received serious leg and pelvic injuries while he was maintaining a conveyor belt at the Saint Gobain Pipelines Plc factory in Ilkeston on 13 December 2004. He was run over by a four tonne rail mounted vehicle.

Saint Gobain Pipelines PLC of Ilkeston had pleaded guilty to charges of breaching Section 2(1) HSWA and reg 17 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 at a previous hearing before Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court on 1 December 2006.

They were sent for sentencing to Derby Crown Court they were fined £150,000 and ordered to pay HSE's costs of £10,000.

Saint Gobain had previously admitted that, at the time of the incident no adequate systems for the segregation of pedestrians and rail mounted vehicles were in place. If they had been the incident would not have happened.

HSE inspector Kevin Wilson, who investigated the incident, said after the case: "*Considering the extent of his injuries Mr Moore has made remarkably good progress - this inci-*

dent could easily have resulted in a fatality. Each year workplace transport incidents account for around 40 deaths and are the second largest cause of fatal and major injuries at work. It is vitally important that transport movements at workplaces are planned and organised. This means eliminating or reducing potential contact between vehicles and pedestrians by providing effective physical barriers with appropriate crossing points. All vehicles should be fitted with good visibility aids to overcome any blind spots and ensure drivers are competent and work in a safe manner. All persons who work on the site must have received the necessary information and instruction informing them of these site rules. HSE can help and advise companies on workplace transport - there's a section on our website which deals with it, and an online assessment to check how well you're doing."

Derby Crown Court—15 January 2007

Maximum penalty for these offences in this court—unlimited fines

RISK OF A FALL FROM HEIGHT ENOUGH TO GROUND A PROSECUTION

The HSE has successfully prosecuted David Clark, a self-employed builder, from Chippenham. David Clark, from East Tytherton near Chippenham in Wiltshire, was convicted of contravening the Working at Height regulations and was fined £2,000 with costs of £1,500.

Construction inspectors from the Bristol HSE office brought the case against Mr Clark after inspecting construction activities Hare Street Farm in Foxham, Chippenham, where Mr Clark and two men he had employed were erecting a farm building. Inspectors found that none of the safety measures required for working at height, such as netting and barriers, had been put in place.

HSE Principal Construction Inspector, Andrew Kingscott, explained the reasons for prosecuting in this non-injury case: "*What we are aiming to do is be proactive and prevent injuries before they happen. The construction industry should be aware that where HSE Inspectors identify that standards on site fall well short of those required then, in addition to stopping the work, we could also bring prosecution pro-*

ceedings.

"We are not prepared to wait for an injury to occur before taking action. This initiative of proactive, risk-led prosecutions means cases can be brought to court more quickly. I believe we will see more of this style of enforcement in the future. In this case, the risks identified were considerable. No steps had been taken, whatsoever, to prevent the three men who were constructing the roof from falling from it. Any fall from this height would have resulted in significant injury or even death. The work was stopped and steps were taken to ensure that it was not completed until suitable protection against the falls was installed. It was considered that risk of injury associated with the work, coupled with the shortfall in the level of control over the risk in this case, warranted prosecution."

Chippenham Magistrates Court—22 January 2007

Maximum penalty for this offence in this court—£5000 fine

ANOTHER FALL FROM HEIGHT

Clearair Property Developments Ltd have been ordered to pay a fine of £1,500 plus £1,559 costs after pleading guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. North Cumbria Magistrates' Court in Carlisle.

Anthony Crack, a joiner from Newton Aycliffe fell through an unprotected stairwell whilst working on the conversion of a barn at Warwick upon Eden, being undertaken by Clearair Property Developments Ltd. He fell a distance of around 2.5m and sustained several injuries, including a spinal fracture and a punctured lung. Clearair, of Victoria Avenue, Bishop Auckland, Durham, was the principal contractor on the site and pleaded guilty to a charge under Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 in that it failed to take suitable measures to prevent Mr Crack from falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

HSE Inspector David Charnock who managed the case said:

"These injuries could so easily have been prevented. Falls from height are one of the most common causes of injury in construction work, yet with proper protective measures, they are easily preventable. The accident was typical of the type of preventable falls which remain all too common in the construction industry. Had there been adequate handrails or coverings in place at the stairwell, the accident could not have happened. Unfortunately, there was nothing to prevent Mr Crack from falling whilst he was working next to the opening. The risks are well known, and the precautions are basic and straightforward. In 2005/06, 24 people lost their lives as a result of falls in the construction industry, and many more were badly injured. Those working in construction must effectively manage the risk of falls from height, and where they do not, they can expect HSE to take appropriate enforcement action."

North Cumbria Magistrates' Court in Carlisle.

Maximum penalty for this offence in this court—£5,000 fine

BASF BILLINGHAM CHEMICAL LEAK

Alex Keddie, Principal Inspector, Hazardous Installations Directorate of the HSE has made the following statement:

"The Health and Safety Executive was alerted to the chemical leak at the BASF, Seal Sands, Billingham plant at around 11.30 on Thursday 4 January 2007. Two of our inspectors were despatched to the plant in order to start our investigations into the incident and HSE continues to work closely with the Environment Agency and Cleveland Police as well as the management of BASF.

Currently we are looking at the management systems used in running the site and also at the plant itself and, as part of the investigations we will also be interviewing all the people involved in the incident.

We have not, as yet, been able to gain access to the plant where the leak occurred as this is still being decontaminated, by BASF, but we will be going in there as soon as this work is completed, hopefully later today.

We cannot say how long our investigations will take but we can say they will be thorough to ensure we get to the bottom of this incident.

It has also been reported that the BASF plant has had other incidents in the recent past which the HSE has had to investigate, including one fatal accident. This is correct but we approach each investigation on its own merits and with an open mind."

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HSE WARNS CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES TO ENSURE USE OF SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Harron Homes (North West) Ltd of Birchwood Park Warrington was fined £18,000 and ordered to pay £4,210 costs after it pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 3(1) HSWA.

The Company were prosecuted for an accident that occurred on 11 October 2004 at a Harron Homes site known as Park Meadow on County Road at Kirkby. Four members of a bricklaying gang were injured when the first floor of the two-storey house in which they were working collapsed.

The floor was supported by joists that were fixed to one side of the building by metal joist hangers. Unfortunately the hangers had not been adequately built into the brickwork. This would not have been so dangerous had the floor been supported from below with props.

Without props or proper use of joist hangers, the weight of the men and large numbers of concrete blocks stacked there to be used in the building work overloaded the floor. The joist hangers had not been installed as per manufacturers' instructions.

The HSE brought the prosecution alleging that the company had failed to ensure the health and safety or per-

sons not in its employment so far as is reasonably practicable when they were working on decked floors joist supported by metal joists hangers.

Robert Hodgkinson, HM Inspector of Health and Safety who investigated the accident said:

"This is the third prosecution I have had to take in relation to the overloading of floors supported by joist hangers. House builders and others who use joist hangers should make sure that they have carried out an adequate assessment of the risks associated with using joist hangers in the particular buildings they are working on. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment, taking account of manufacturers instructions, should enable them to develop safe systems of work. Those working on construction sites of this type should be fully informed of the safe systems of work to follow. It is fortunate that the four were men who were injured in the collapse suffered relatively minor injuries. However this incident could have easily resulted in one or more fatalities and the level of penalty set by the Magistrates reflects the potential seriousness of this accident."

Huyton Magistrates Court—26 January 2007

Maximum fine for this offence in this court £20,000 fine

HSE POLICE LAUNCH JOINT INVESTIGATION INTO TOWER CRANE INCIDENT IN LIVERPOOL

Statement from Mike Cross, HSE Head of Operations (Construction). *"I can confirm that yesterday HSE was notified that a tower crane had collapsed on a Liverpool city centre construction site operated by David McClean Ltd at approximately 4:10pm. Tragically one worker was killed and another injured. HSE inspectors went immediately to the scene and liaised with the emergency services.*

On behalf of HSE I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the families of the workers who were killed and injured yesterday. I would like to assure them that there will be a full and thorough enquiry in to the accident. Today my inspectors have met with senior officers from Merseyside police to agree how we will jointly investigate the circumstances in accordance with the normal arrangements for investigating work-related deaths. The inspectors who attended yesterday have now been joined by a HSE crane specialist and forensic photographers. It is far too early to speculate as to the cause of the collapse. Our main concern at this stage is to ensure that the site is made safe so that the investigation can proceed without anyone else being

injured. Arrangements have been made to assess parts of the building, which were damaged by the incident to see if additional temporary support is needed before we can access them. We will also be bringing in mobile access equipment to examine the parts of the crane now lying across the site.

This accident follows others involving tower cranes in London and the South East. However, I want to emphasise it is much too soon for us to know if they are connected in any way to this latest incident.

Following those earlier incidents HSE issued a safety alert which is available on the HSE website. Today we have issued a further alert drawing the construction industry's attention to the advice we issued previously. I understand that the people of Merseyside may be concerned about the safety of the many tower cranes, which can be seen around the city. I am urging all building companies on Merseyside to ensure they are following our advice, which if followed, should ensure that these cranes can be operated safely."

HSE PROHIBITS OPERATION OF TOWER CRANES SUPPLIED BY FALCON CRANE HIRE LTD

The HSE has served a Prohibition Notice on Falcon Crane Hire Ltd of Shipdam, Norfolk. The notice required them, with immediate effect, to take out of service all tower cranes in their fleet which have not been subject to a thorough examination by an independent competent person.

The HSE has taken this action following the collapse of two of the company's tower cranes in less than four months at sites in Battersea (London) and Liverpool. Both incidents are the subject of on-going investigations and it is therefore too early for us to be able to identify the exact causes of either failure.

Nevertheless, the HSE has decided to adopt a precautionary approach and require the company to demonstrate those cranes which have been thoroughly examined by competent persons employed by them, are safe to continue in operation. Any lessons learnt from the investigations will be shared with the industry as soon as possible.

The Notice will affect up to 180 tower cranes which are erected currently on construction sites throughout Great Britain. Cranes which have already been examined by an independent competent person are not af-

ected by the Notice and can continue in service. The HSE has commented that it is conscious of the severe disruption the prohibition notice will cause but says that it is sure that the industry will support our action in the interests of the safety of workers and the public.

The HSE has also emphasised that Falcon Crane Hire Ltd has cooperated fully and have agreed the steps they will take to comply with the Notice. The HSE has said that it will be working with the company to ensure the remediation process is carried out as quickly as possible so that the cranes can return to use.

Falcon Crane Hire Ltd are in the process of informing all the construction companies whose sites are affected and are preparing a programme for the examinations.

Ed—the implications of this notice are dramatic. Prohibition notices are served where there is a perceived breach of health and safety law accompanied by a risk of serious personal injury or worse.

Given the incidents under investigation I will be surprised if we don't hear more about Falcon Crane Hire in future editions of Brunswicks Regulatory News.

UNDERGROUND PERILS IN LIVERPOOL

Morgan Utilities Limited of Newman Street, London and one of their managers, Gordon Holt of Pilling Street in Rochdale, each pleaded guilty to charges brought by the HSE after two employees had been observed by an HSE inspector working in an unsupported excavation, approximately two metres deep in Liverpool City Centre in October 2005. They were fined a total of £11,000 and ordered to pay £8,800 costs.

HSE inspector Neil Jamieson, who took the cases said: "There was a high risk of collapse and consequent injury given that spoil was stored immediately adjacent to the excavation sides, an excavator was also operating in close proximity to the edge, and the risks were further accentuated from vibration emanating from the nearby Liverpool Underground Railway System. Two employees of Morgan Utilities were working at the junction of Church Street and Whitechapel Street in Liverpool City Centre installing a new section of 225mm diameter fresh water main in a trench approximately six metres long and just under a metre wide at approximately two metres depth with no shoring to the almost vertical sides of the trench. Mr Holt,

who was managing the work, was aware it was being undertaken in the manner described. During the last five years HSE had made two visits to sites where Morgan Utilities was carrying out excavation work, which caused concern as people were working in deep, unsupported excavations."

Morgan Utilities pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 2 (1) HSWA in that it did not provide a safe place of work for its employees. It was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £8,000 costs

Mr Holt pleaded guilty to an offence under Section 7 (a) of the HSW Act in that he failed to take reasonable care for the health and safety of other persons who might be affected by his acts or omissions at work whilst carrying out his duties as site supervisor. He was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £800 costs.

Liverpool Magistrates Court

Maximum fines in this court—for breaching s2, £20,000, for breaching s7—£5,000

ANOTHER ROOF FALL

Manchester firm Foildek Roofings Ltd has been fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £6,939 costs at Manchester Crown Court . The company pleaded guilty to breaching its health and safety duty owed to its employees under s2 HSWA.

The prosecution followed an accident to Foildek employee Lee Quinlan of Chadderton who sustained multiple injuries while working on a fragile roof at Leggett Freightways Ltd on Hammond Avenue, Reddish in Stockport on 7 May 2004 when he stepped on and fell approximately over 7m through an asbestos cement corrugated roof panel onto the warehouse floor.

Mr Quinlan suffered two broken wrists, a broken right ankle, broken left elbow, and a fractured skull with bleeding on the brain. He also lost four teeth. Foildek had failed to ensure that a safe system of work was adopted for its work at the premises.

HSE Inspector Warren Pennington who carried out HSE's investigation of the incident, said:

"Plenty of guidance is available to the roofing industry. The risks associated with falls through fragile roofs are well known and documented. However in this case Foildek failed to have proper regard for the safety of men who were placed at risk and, as a result, when an accident occurred. Mr Quinlan was seriously injured. Had he been provided with a safe system of work in the form of appropriate method statements with suitable and sufficient risk assessments and had these been enforced then the accident almost certainly would not have occurred.

The risks associated with working on fragile roofs are well known and guidance on how to do so is available from HSE."

Employees Lee and Christopher Quinlan, Ian Turner and William Jones were working on corrugated roofs constructed from asbestos corrugated roof sheets and transparent roof lights that should always be treated as

fragile. No scaffold was used to gain safer access to the roof, nor was there any edge protection.

Mr Pennington continued:

"Although Foildek had drawn up a method statement for the job in Stockport it was inadequate for a variety of reasons, including that:

** although it identified risks with moving, lifting and handling materials it failed to provide a safe system for raising of replacement roof sheets from ground to roof. Lifting by one man pushing panels up a ladder to another standing on the roof was unsafe;*

** it did not state the width of tower scaffold required, had no detail about the standard of tower scaffold erection and failed to identify that it would be needed as a base from which to lay roof boards or the need for edge protection;*

** it failed to provide edge protection to protect the men from a fall from the roof;*

** it failed to impose control measures to prevent the risk of falls through the roof on any of three warehouse roofs."*

Ed if there is one constant refrain in these pages it is the accidents and prosecutions that follow falls from height. It is a depressing constant litany almost invariably involving death or serious injury.

I'm sure if the HSE could work out what it is about the risks associated with working at height they'd try other forms of intervention.

If any of you have any ideas do please let me and the HSE know!

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Look out for the interview with Chris Howard the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service discussing Fire Risk Assessment and the new "police" style culture the Fire Service is heading towards.

EVENTS

HSE AIMS TO REDUCE HIGH RATE OF FATAL AND MAJOR INJURY IN CONSTRUCTION

The HSE is hosting a workshop on 13 February at Bescott Stadium in a bid to reduce the high rates of fatalities and serious accidents in the construction industry.

In 2005/2006 there were 61 fatal injuries and 3677 major injuries to workers in construction. With this in mind HSE as part of the Working Well Together programme have organized two free, half day events as the latest in a nationwide series of Construction Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) to advise those in the business on good practice and safety procedures when on site.

Richard Lockwood, Principal Construction Inspector for the West Midlands, said:

"Small companies can sometimes miss out on health and safety information and developments in best practice. They can find training expensive and difficult to arrange. If you run a small building, construction or contracting company, or if you are self employed, and would like up to date advice to help you get to grips with health and safety, this free event is a must. It is aimed at those small contractors who underestimate the impact poor health and safety performance can have on their own lives and those who work with them; the financial impact on their business if things go wrong; and who have yet to realise that

health and safety can actually make good business sense. It is an event for the industry, from the industry.

Seventy five percent of all people killed or hurt on building sites across the country work for small companies employing fewer than 15 people. It is only by working together that we will see the recent improvements in the construction industry fatality statistics be converted into a real trend for improvement. A sustained effort from industry is required to secure year-on-year improvements."

Areas of greatest risk on construction sites will be highlighted in a practical way including demonstrations and the latest information on a variety of topics focusing on the "high 5" risks on site:

The basics (Skanska,) - Tidy sites and housekeeping
 Work at Height (HSE, Zarges, Hewden) - Ladders and Fall prevention
 Manual handling (HSE, Speedy) - Musculoskeletal disorders and Kerb lifting
 Workplace transport (A-Plant) - Traffic management
 Occupational Health (3M) - Noise and Dust
 CDM Regulation (HSE) - Briefing on new CDM Regs

MAJOR CHANGES TO HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW AWARENESS DAY FOR SHROPSHIRE BUSINESSES

An awareness event aimed at keeping Shropshire businesses up to date with health and safety changes in the workplace will take place on 14 February. The event is being jointly organised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Marches Health, Safety and Fire Group.

HSE Awareness Officer Sarah Wilson said:

"This half day event has been designed to keep Shropshire businesses informed of changes to workplace Health and Safety regulations which will directly affect them. Those attending will also have the opportunity to network with others and raise aspects of health and safety concerns with inspectors and other advisors."

The Safety and Health Awareness event will feature key topics including:

- * Working at height including changes to CDM Regulations
 - * HSE's Better Backs Campaign including managing sickness absence and return to work
 - * The new fire safety legislation
 - * Benefits of the local pro-active safety group
 - * Changes to first aid guidance
1. This event takes place on wednesday 14 February and will run from 9am to 1pm. It will take place at the Lord Hill Hotel, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AX.
 2. To reserve a place please contact Sarah Wilson on 01782 602363.
 3. There is a £25 fee for those who are not members of the Marches Health, Safety and Fire Group.

NORTH WALES TESTS OUT ONE STOP SHOP FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLAINTS

A more proactive approach to resolving health and safety complaints is the objective of a new pilot being run by three local authorities in North Wales and supported the HSE

Starting on Monday 22nd January, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham authorities will take part in joint complaints handling pilot, lasting six weeks. All complaints normally received by the respective environmental health departments for those local authorities will be handled by one office, which will then refer them to the relevant local authority or to the HSE depending on who has jurisdiction over the complaint. HSE Director for Wales, Terry Rose said: "*Directing all complaints to one central point has several advantages. It will reduce the time specialist environmental health officers spend dealing with calls, which means they will have more time to spend on proactively improving health and safety in the workplace. Also, many callers may not be aware of which matters are the responsibility of the local authority and which matters*

fall to the HSE. The central contact point will be able to refer matters onto the relevant authority, and ensure complaints are directed to the appropriate department. This pilot is one of many partnership projects between HSE and local authorities in North Wales."

Jenny Prendergast, Chair of the North Wales Health and Safety Task Group added: "*The three local authorities will take it in turn to operate the central point of contact, starting with Flintshire, and we are confident that this short trial will demonstrate some real benefits for the authorities and for the public. If successful, we hope that the pilot could be extended to include other local authorities in Wales, with the eventual goal of setting up a freephone telephone service similar to that operated by trading standards officers in Wales. For this initial pilot though, members of the public wishing to make a complaint or provide information about a health and safety issue can call their local authority and the details will be passed on directly to the relevant organisation for action.*"

YORK'S FIRST HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

York's working community will be out in force on Monday, 22 January, when almost 200 local people will come together in the Guildhall to help the HSE and York City Council launch York as a 'Safer Working Community' with some heavyweight lifting and loading. Turning the spotlight on manual handling and bad backs is only one of the ways in which York is leading the rest of the UK by becoming a healthier, safer place to live and work. Free advice and information seminars on key issues like farm safety, smoking, violence at work, fire safety, pest control and first aid will all help to create a better working environment for all York's citizens, with fewer workplace accidents and less time, and money, lost through ill health.

Inspectors from the local authority and the HSE have already been making an increased number of checks on local premises to identify problems and recommend opportunities during the event week for free, confidential problem-solving.

The timetable of the week's events in the Guildhall is:
22nd January

9am - Breakfast Launch 10.30am - Manual Handling
11.45am - Slips, Trips and Falls in the Workplace
1.30pm - Smoke Free England 2.30pm - Fire Safety @

Work 3.30pm - Best Bar None 4.30pm - Violence & Work

Wednesday

24th January

Agricultural Safety Awareness Day -

presentation & health and safety inspection at a farm in York carried out by the Health and Safety Executive

Thursday

25th January

10.30am - First Aid & Work 11.30am - Contact Dermatitis

12.30pm - Pest Control 1.30pm - Chemical Safety

2.30pm - Health & Safety Training 3.30pm - Electricity at Work

Friday

26th January

9.30am - Small Business Risk Assessments 10.30am - Hospitality in the Catering Industry 11.00am - Fire Safety

12.30pm - Catering Risk Assessments 1.30pm - Chemical Safety 2.25pm - Asbestos Awareness & Catering Industry

3.00pm - Your Responsibilities under Health & Safety at Work 4.00pm - Close

HSE FOCUS ON WOODWORKING INJURIES

The HSE is hosting a workshop on 14 February in a bid to reduce the very high rates of serious accidents in West Midlands woodworking premises.

Every year many workers are seriously injured in the many joiners, carpenters and furniture makers around the West Midlands, and, nationally, woodworking has one of the highest rates of major injury - 540 in 2003/2004 - of any business.

HSE principal inspector Mike Burd said:

"HSE is inviting small woodworking businesses throughout the West Midlands to attend a Safety and Health Awareness day at the South Birmingham College Construction Centre. The rate of major injury in woodworking is around three times the manufacturing average. In fact, in the league table of industries causing the highest rates of major injuries, the manufacture of wood and wood products is in third place behind scrap and waste recycling, and mining. Construction comes in at seven and agriculture at twelve."

The Safety and Health Awareness day will feature practical interactive demonstrations of scenarios that regularly feature in the accidents reported by woodworking busi-

nesses. These will include typical machinery and manual handling accidents. Each scenario will highlight the risks involved and give practical demonstrations on how these risks can be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels.

The day is being run in partnership with an independent woodworking training provider. The day offers attendees the unique opportunity of being able to discuss safety issues with the people responsible for enforcing the law on neutral ground.

Mike continued:

"HSE will view individual business's attendance as a positive commitment that they will manage health and safety risks within their workplace. In return for attendance, HSE is undertaking not to visit the company to carry out an inspection for at least one year following the event. However, companies will be expected to use the year to put the guidance they have received at the event into practice. Only those woodworking companies who do not attend are likely to be visited during the next year."

Ed—if that isn't an incentive to attend I don't know what is!

FARM INSPECTION BLITZ

Farms in the Kennet area of Wiltshire will be the target of a "surprise" visits by HSE inspectors when a South West regional inspection 'blitz' to promote the dangers of 'Falls from Height' and 'Transport in the Agricultural sector' takes place.

This 'blitz' is aimed predominantly at the larger, 'employing' farms which (according to HSE records) are likely to carry out activities or have plant, equipment or buildings which put people at risk of falls from height or from the movement of transport.

"About half of all agricultural fatalities - running at approximately 50 deaths each year according to national statistics - result from either a transport-related accident or a fall from height," explained HSE Principal Inspector, Nigel Long, "and evidence suggests that serious injuries resulting from falls are also a significant problem in the agricultural sector, although we don't have the numbers currently because of the under-reporting of incidents in the industry. However, our aim is to encourage those we visit to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem and take measures to protect themselves, their workers and visitors to the farm from the dangers of transport movements and falls from height in agriculture. We will be offering information and practical, simple advice on how to avoid the types of tragic incident we've seen in our region in recent years.

Also, we will be explaining what the law requires and why, as well as hopefully dispelling some of the myths surrounding the legislation and regulations governing safety in this area."

Inspectors anticipate visiting around 40 farms in the blitz and will be focusing their attention on:

- building and vehicle maintenance and repair
- training and competence of vehicle operators
- cleaning of grain stores, pits, silos and elevators
- construction, maintenance and use of equipment for access to and carrying out of work at heights

Farmers visited will be expected to demonstrate a realistic awareness of the potential hazards on their farms and of the health and safety risks that these hazards represent. They will be expected, also, to have taken any action necessary to ensure the health and safety of all those working on the farm.

Those who think they might get an HSE visit during the 'blitz' week should take practical steps to prepare their premises. They should take stock of their working environment and be prepared to point out to the inspectors where they believe there might be a risk of falls from height or significant transport risks and what they have done, or propose to do, to ensure health and safety standards are met.

RHONDDA HEALTH AND SAFETY EVENT AIMS TO HELP WOODWORKERS TO KEEP ON WORKING

WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2007 COLEG MORGANNWG, TONYPANDY.

Woodworking has one of the highest rates of major injury, and so the Health and Safety Executive are running a free event in the Rhondda aimed at helping those working in the woodwork industry to effectively manage the risks they face.

The manufacture of wood products invariably involve a risk from using machinery, but other risks include the possibility of developing asthma from wood dust, and musculoskeletal injuries from lifting and carrying.

The event, which is being held at Coleg Morgannwg, Tonypany, runs on Wednesday 21st February and is open to employers and employees.

Steve Coppel, Head of Operations for HSE in Wales said:

"I've probably investigated around 150 woodworking accidents myself over the years; in most cases these have resulted in very serious injuries, and I've met far too many wood machinists with missing fingers and sometimes whole hands.

"Almost without exception, taking simple precautions would have prevented these accidents, and in my experience a lack of knowledge on the part of managers, supervisors and machinists about what steps can be taken to eliminate or minimise the risks, has been an almost universal feature in these accidents. Self employed woodworkers are particularly hardest hit if they suffer an injury which leaves them unable to work - and earn income - for any period of time. HSE is perhaps best known for its more traditional approach to workplace Inspection and enforcement to make sure businesses comply with the law, and prevent harm to their employees, but we have always also been

there to provide advice and guidance to businesses."

The event will feature practical interactive demonstrations of scenarios that regularly feature in the accidents reported by woodworking businesses. These will include typical machinery and manual handling accidents. Each scenario will highlight the risks involved and give practical demonstrations on how these risks can be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels."

HSE is running the events in partnership with an independent woodworking-training provider. The day offers attendees the unique opportunity of being able to discuss safety issues with the people responsible for enforcing the law on neutral ground.

HSE will view individual business's attendance as a positive commitment that they will manage health and safety risks within their workplace. In return for attendance, HSE is undertaking not to visit the company to carry out an inspection for at least one year following the event - unless there has been a reportable accident or a complaint.

However, companies will be expected to use the year to put the guidance they have received at the event into practice. Woodworking companies who do not attend are likely to be visited during the next year.

Two sessions will run from 09.00 am to 12.30 pm and from 13.00 to 16.15 pm. Both sessions will take place at Coleg Morgannwg, Rhondda Campus, Pontrhondda Road, Llwynypia, Tonypany, CF40 2TQ. If you would like to attend, and have not received an invitation, please contact Wendie Drammeh at HSE, wendie.drammeh@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

SOUTH YORKS INDUSTRY SPRINGS INTO SAFETY

Businesses are being given a chance to follow up on the most up-to-the-minute health and safety information, and best of all it's being delivered to them free of charge in Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Doncaster Chamber are joining forces to offer employers and employees, and anyone with an interest in workplace health and safety, a chance to take part in a lively morning workshop which features a full programme of essential topics presented by specialist health and safety professionals.

Take slips and trips. It sounds too simple to be an important issue and yet these are the most common cause

of workplace accidents in the UK. Add to this wide-ranging and important issues like asbestos, workplace transport, and ergonomics, and you have the kind of information and support available that can help any business keep its staff safe, healthy and productive.

The event takes place on 21st February 2007 at the Doncaster Deaf Trust, St Leger Way, Doncaster, from 9am to 12.30pm. Anyone wishing to find out more should contact Ann McLeod on Tel: 01302 341000 as soon as possible, or email: amcleod@doncaster-chamber.co.uk.

JUGGLING WITH FIRE - A RISK WORTH TAKING?...

Like all risks it can be a risk worth taking, when given careful consideration and sensible health and safety control measures.

This is the driving point behind a novel partnership initiative announced on Thursday 25 January 2007 by the HSE and Calderdale MBC, 'Calderdale Safer Working Communities'. Its key message will be delivered in a most unexpected way - the representatives of organisations and businesses who will be arriving to pledge their support to next month's initiative will be greeted by a health and safety inspector walking on stilts and juggling with fire.

From 26 February - 2 March 2007 the HSE and Calderdale MBC will be staging a week of wide-ranging events aimed at businesses in the Calderdale area. The events are free to attend and will give information and advice on how to manage health and safety effectively, through sensible risk management. The programme includes such diverse issues as safety in construction and allied trades, violence at work for taxi and private hire drivers, safety in motor vehicle repair workshops, fleet management safety, carbon monoxide and general safety in private rented accommodation, fire risk assessment, manual handling, health and safety in manufacturing and allied trades, dermatitis in hairdressing, health and safety in the performing arts, warehouse safety and agricultural and equestrian safety.

Says HSE Operations Manager Geoff Cox:

"Fundamental to all these issues is the principle of 'sensible risk'. Risk management involves employers protecting the public and their most valuable assets, their staff, by looking at the risks that arise in the workplace and then putting sensible health and safety measures in place to control them. During 2004/05, 220 people were killed and over 150,000 were injured at work because of a failure to manage risk."

Peter Ramsdale, Head of Environmental Health, Calderdale MBC, adds:

"In Calderdale there are approximately 8500 businesses, many of which employ people. All of these people have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. This initiative gives their employers and the self-employed access FREE of charge to the information and advice that they need to enable them to manage health and safety effectively."

NOTE

Calderdale businesses are invited to attend any of these events. Anyone wishing to book a place or have further information should contact Calderdale MBC Environmental Health Services on 01422 392320 or 01422 392344 or email: environmental.health@calderdale.gov.uk



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Incidentally Brunswicks was the first UK law firm to create podcasts.

HSE GRANTS CONSENT FOR THORP RE-START

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) announced today that it has granted consent for the re-start of the THORP facility at the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant.

HSE's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) is satisfied that the licensee, British Nuclear Group Sellafield Ltd (BNGSL), has done all the work necessary to ensure that THORP can be re-started and operated safely.

This work includes satisfactorily addressing the recommendations arising from NII's investigation of a leak of radioactive liquid inside a shielded facility within

THORP; clearing all BNGSL's own recommendations arising from that incident; and completing any plant modifications and safety case improvements necessary to ensure safety.

The actual date for restart of reprocessing new fuel at THORP is a matter for BNGSL.

With the recent bad weather the HSE is urging everyone with responsibility for trees to take expert advice on their safety.