

August 2011

Client Update



Health and Safety, Quality and Environmental Management

Workplace Deaths Increase

“Britain still has one of the lowest rates of fatal injury anywhere in Europe.”

The number of people killed at work in Britain last year rose by 16 per cent, prompting renewed calls on the Government to rethink its strategy to reduce health and safety activity and resources. Provisional figures released by the HSE revealed that 171 workers died in 2010/11 – up from the record low of 147 deaths in 2009/10. The rate of fatal injury per 100,000 workers also went up – from 0.5 to 0.6.

“all stakeholders to continue to focus on “real risks and not on trivia and pointless paperwork”

The construction industry recorded 50 deaths among its workers – an increase of 22 per cent on last year’s total of 41 fatalities. The fatal-injury rate in the industry was 2.4 deaths per 100,000 workers. In the agriculture sector, which, along with construction, is traditionally the most dangerous in which to work, deaths fell from 39 last year to 34 in 2010/11.

HSE chair Judith Hackitt admitted that the increase was “disappointing” but was keen to emphasise that Britain still has one of the lowest rates of fatal injury anywhere in Europe. Calling on all stakeholders to continue to focus on “real risks and not on trivia and pointless paperwork”, she said: “We all have a role to play – employers, employees and regulators – and leadership is fundamental to maintaining and improving our performance even further.”

But the TUC, while agreeing that the responsibility for the rise in fatalities “must be placed at the door of negligent employers”, was adamant that more needs to be done by the Government to ensure workers are pro-

tected. Said general secretary, Brendan Barber: “The Government’s recent decision to reduce workplace inspections, and the budget cuts for both the HSE and local authorities, make it far less likely that problems will be identified before something goes wrong. “Traditionally, injury rates increase as we come out of a recession. If we are going to stop this year’s increase becoming a long-term trend we need more inspections in the workplace, not fewer.”

His comments were echoed by IOSH, which said that as the economy recovers and industry picks up it is “essential” to maintain inspection levels, increase awareness and ensure access to reliable information and advice. Head of policy and public affairs Richard Jones commented: “We are disappointed and concerned with the overall increase in fatalities, particularly the growth in the construction and waste and recycling sectors. Cuts mustn’t cost lives and one death is too many.”

The union that represents HSE staff pointed out that the figures were “even more alarming, given that economic output has remained stagnant over the past 12 months”. Mike Macdonald, negotiator for Prospect, called on the Government to rethink the 35-per-cent cut to the regulator’s budget, saying: “Not only does the HSE’s work save lives and reduce the misery felt by friends and family following the death of a loved one, it saves industry and the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds in lost working days and medical bills. Therefore, we have to question how appropriate it is



for the Government to make cuts of 35 per cent, which will result in fewer front-line inspections.” He added that Prospect is particularly concerned by the decision to scale back proactive inspections – something which pressure group the Hazards Campaign also emphasised in its reaction to the latest figures.

The Campaign said: “Nationally, there were 47 deaths in the services sector, 34 in agriculture, and 27 in manufacturing – all sectors that will soon be free of unannounced, proactive inspections that spot hazards before they kill someone, but which [Employment minister] Chris Grayling has scrapped.”

However, the minister countered with the assertion that “the reforms will ensure that action is better targeted on those who irresponsibly put workers and the public at risk”.

The statistics can be viewed on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/fatals.htm

Source: www.shponline.co.uk July ‘11

Crackdown on dishonest claims management firms

“the reasons for action included evidence of fraud, misleading marketing and aggressive sales techniques”

The Government’s efforts to tackle the UK’s apparent compensation culture have received a boost with the announcement that a record number of rogue claims-management companies have been shut down by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in the last year.

A total of 349 firms was closed down last year in comparison to 35 the year before – a ten-fold increase – and 256 of these companies operated in the personal-injury market. The MoJ’s Claims Management Regulation Unit aims to prevent firms from exploiting

vulnerable consumers by over-selling expectations of compensation payouts. The firms that had their licences taken away in 2010/11 were either found to be in breach of rules, or failed to meet the regulator’s requirements for authorisation.

In the worst cases, the reasons for action included evidence of fraud, misleading marketing and aggressive sales techniques. During the year, the regulation unit also targeted unsolicited e-marketing, in particular, SMS text messages, which some claims compa-

nies use to market their services.

Kevin Rousell, who heads up the Claims Management Regulation Unit, said: “We have made it very clear to businesses that we are not going to accept any malpractice, or attempts to take advantage of vulnerable people. There will be no let-up in the coming year. Companies should remain in no doubt that if they breach the rules they will be closed down.”

Source: www.shponline.co.uk August ‘11



UK Offices
Bromsgrove
London
Manchester
Leamington Spa
Phone: 0844 736 2624
E-mail: info@watraining.co.uk
info@wamangement.co.uk
www.watraining.co.uk

Factory found guilty over unsafe loading method

A factory worker suffered serious head injuries when a powered industrial truck overturned on an uneven surface and fell on him.

The incident took place at cleaning products manufacturer Revelholme Marketing Ltd's (trading as Unic International) facility in Nottingham January 2009. The worker, who wishes to remain anonymous, was helping to load a lorry using a semi-electric stacker truck.

The factory's car park was full so the lorry was parked in the road outside the site's gates. The worker transported a number of loaded pallets from the factory to the lorry using the stacker truck. Once he had finished loading the lorry he began walking back towards the factory with a colleague, who was pulling the stacker truck. As they mounted the pavement, the truck was pulled over the kerb and overturned, striking the worker in the back of the head.



truck overturned, but he escaped unhurt.

HSE inspector Stuart Pilkington said that the truck was not designed for use on uneven surfaces it was used on and the company had failed to identify this danger. He explained that the incident could have been avoided if the lorry had been unloaded inside the factory using the same equipment, or by using a forklift truck if the vehicle

was parked offsite. Inspector Pilkington said: "The stacker truck was mainly used in the factory and car park, but on occasion employees used the truck to load lorries in the road. A slope between the two surfaces and the lip of the dropped kerb made the terrain unsuitable for this type of equipment to be used. Companies need to ensure that the work equipment they use, such as stacker trucks, is suitable for the task, and for the conditions in which it is used."

Unic International appeared at Nottingham Magistrates' Court on 13 July and was found guilty of breaching reg. 4(3) of PUWER 1998, for using work equipment under unsafe conditions, following a three-day trial. It was fined £5000 and ordered to pay £18,000 in costs.

In mitigation, the company said it had no previous convictions and insisted that it felt its method of work was safe. It has subsequently stopped loading vehicles outside its premises and expressed its regret for the incident.

Source: www.shponline.co.uk

Require CHAS?



Many companies that undertake work in the public and private sector are required to be CHAS certified to undertake the work. Certification can often be time consuming and Bureaucratic.

WA Management now have the ability for a small cost to undertake a comprehensive company wide audit, which if successful will lead to CHAS certification without any stress or additional paperwork. If this is of interest, then contact us: info@watraining.co.uk

Confirmed IOSH Managing Safety Training Dates:

- Warwick—12-13 and 19-20 October 2011

Cost £595 plus VAT

In House Training upon Request.

PLUS NEW

Safety for Senior Executives

Contact Us for details. In House Training upon Request.

info@watraining.co.uk

He suffered a fractured cheekbone and was hospitalised for 10 days. He was unable to return to work for three months and has impaired vision following the incident. His colleague was struck in the shoulder when the

Gadgets 'causing workplace disruption'

Employers who hand out smartphones and laptops to their staff may be unwittingly creating a class of disruptive gadget addicts in the workplace, a new study suggests.

According to software group Harmon.ie, phones and computers issued by firms to improve productivity and keep employees connected may be having the opposite effect.



Some of the workers are turning into compulsive texters and social networkers who cannot keep away from their gadget even when they are at meetings, said the group which polled 1,140 people in London.

At face-to-face meetings, more than four in 10 of workers have their attention diverted by their communication devices, the study found.

Nearly a third (31%) admitted they have interrupted a meeting to take calls or check a message or mail.

Harmon.ie vice president of product strategy David Lavenda said it was a "classic case of double standards in the workplace".

Around 82% of people said they are annoyed by colleagues who cause disruption by answering calls, texting or tweeting while in a meeting. The study also found 19% of workers who are asked by their bosses to turn off their gadgets simply ignore the command.

Source: <http://www.gpbusiness.co.uk>

Training Services

City and Guilds, NPORS or ITSSAR training can be used towards your employees NVQ's. WA Training provide flexible on site certified training in areas such as:

- Fork Lift Truck Licence
- Mobile Scaffolding Erection
- Cherry Picker Licence
- Chop Saw
- Scissor Lift Licence
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Slings/Banksman
- Abrasive Wheel

Please contact us directly for more details and prices at: info@watraining.co.uk

