

KEEP IT SAFE

BFFF QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

OCTOBER 2009 EDITION

Welcome to the BFFF quarterly Health and Safety newsletter 'Keep it Safe'.

Many of you will have seen our health and safety column in 'The Bulletin'. The Bulletin will contain headline information on health and safety topics; 'Keep it Safe' will provide more comprehensive information relevant to our industry.

We do hope you find 'Keep It Safe' a valuable read. Please contact BFFF on 01400 283090 or email joannahancock@bfff.co.uk if you have any health and safety issues or wish to receive additional/back copies

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BFFF HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

We are delighted to inform you that Joanna Hancock, our Health & Safety expert returns from maternity leave on Monday 19th October 2009. Her normal working days will be Monday – Wednesday.

If you have any queries concerning Health & Safety please contact Joanna directly on 01400 283096 or email: joannahancock@bfff.co.uk.

H&S WORKING GROUP

The BFFF H&S Working Group meet on a quarterly basis to discuss health & safety issues and help provide solutions to problematic areas. If you have any queries which you wish to be raised at the next meeting on a confidential basis, please contact Joanna Hancock by email joannahancock@bfff.co.uk or on 01400 283096.

BFFF have in-conjunction with the HSE and Health & Safety Laboratories, organised a ground breaking seminar on slips which will take place at Aston Villa FC on Wednesday 28th October 2009. Three BFFF members will present industry specific case studies.

For more details email hazelcranidge@bfff.co.uk or click [here](#) to download a booking form.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLEDGE

It is nearly a year since the launch of the BFFF Health & Safety Pledge and I'm delighted that over 40 members have already signed up.

The Pledge was introduced to promote the benefits and emphasise the importance of complying with all current health and safety legislation and of striving to improve standards of health and safety through continuous improvement.

For those of you that have signed up, we will issue new certificates soon. If anyone is interested in signing up but hasn't done so already, please contact joannahancock@bfff.co.uk for more information and a copy of the Pledge.

WORKING AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS

You will see under the Legislative Update section, the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR) are to be assessed with regard to how they have been implemented by and their impact on those affected by them.

BFFF has long campaigned against the practicalities of these regulations and are in the process of developing clear guidelines for the frozen food industry with the HSE and the Food Storage & Distribution Federation (FSDF), so that the industry has something more practical to work with.

We are awaiting to hear from the HSE and FSDF if they are happy with our final draft so that we can then publish the guidance and distribute it as widely as possible. We will keep you posted.

BFFF LAPS AGREEMENT

As you may be aware, BFFF has a unique partnership with the HSE in the Midlands and the Local Authority in Boston, Lincs. This is part of the Lead Authority Partnership Scheme (LAPS).

Through this partnership, HSER provide us with statistics which are particular to the frozen food industry and which we are able to break down into fatal, non-fatal and over 3-day accidents for producers, wholesalers and retailers. We are also able to provide accident numbers for the freight transport and storage of frozen and refrigerated goods categories. HSE have now also supplied us with statistics for enforcement notices and prosecutions for the last two years in the same categories as above, which we hope, will be of interest to you. Both sets of figures are included in this newsletter.

I am pleased to advise that as part of this agreement, HSE have agreed to research and provide case studies for case studies specific to the frozen food industry, which we will publish in this, and forthcoming editions of 'Keep It Safe' for your information.

HSE INJURY RATE STATISTICS

2005/06 - 2007/08

Producers

Rate of Injury per 100,000 employees

	Fatal Injuries			Non-Fatal Major Injuries			Over 3 Day Injuries		
	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst
2007/08	0	0.5	1.9	158.2	233.0	305.2	363.6	886.6	1762.7
2006/07	0	0.5	5.7	89.0	170.6	255.7	454.5	904.7	1288.1
2005/06	0	0	0	95.7	192.3	247.5	588.2	995.0	1267.2

Wholesalers

Rate of Injury per 100,000 employees

	Fatal Injuries			Non-Fatal Major Injuries			Over 3 Day Injuries		
	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst
2007/08	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.0	51.8	61.9	87.0	214.2	253.6
2006/07	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.8	73.7	107.9	179.3	239.4	253.6
2005/06	0.0	0.0	0.0	49.5	78.7	123.8	186.8	319.2	395.9

Retailers

Rate of Injury per 100,000 employees

	Fatal Injuries			Non-Fatal Major Injuries			Over 3 Day Injuries		
	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst
2007/08	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	103.9	109.3	79.5	517.7	555.5
2006/07	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.2	106.4	123.8	39.7	525.1	561.3
2005/06	0.0	0.1	3.3	18.4	101.2	110.1	53.9	511.2	538.9

These statistics are provided by the HSE and have been grouped into sectors using the UK Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes for the Economic activities of each economic sector.

The workplace analysis data is taken from the 2005 Annual Business Inquiry for 2005/06 and 2006/07 and the Annual Business Inquiry 2007/08 Annual Business Inquiry for the 2007/08 figures

2005/06 - 2007/08

Freight Transport

Number of Injuries Per Year

	Fatal Injuries	Non-Fatal Major Injuries	Over 3 Day Injuries
2007/08	11	1577	7198
2006/07	0	1576	7607
2005/06	11	1542	7795

Storage Of Frozen & Refrigerated Goods

Number of Injuries Per Year

	Fatal Injuries	Non-Fatal Major Injuries	Over 3 Day Injuries
2007/08	0	7	18
2006/07	0	6	36
2005/06	0	12	54

As employment figures are not available for the above two sectors, we have provided the number of injuries

HSE ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTION STATISTICS BY MEMBERSHIP SECTORS

2006/07 - 2007/08

Producers

	Number of Notices				Number of Prosecutions	
	Improvement	Deferred	Prohibition	Total	Convictions	Total Informations
2007/08	120	2	23	145	28	37
2006/07	251	1	56	308	23	23

Wholesalers

	Number of Notices				Number of Prosecutions	
	Improvement	Deferred	Prohibition	Total	Convictions	Total Informations
2007/08	5	0	7	12	0	0
2006/07	3	0	1	4	1	1

Retailers

	Number of Notices				Number of Prosecutions	
	Improvement	Deferred	Prohibition	Total	Convictions	Total Informations
2007/08	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006/07	3	0	0	3	0	0

Freight Transport

	Number of Notices				Number of Prosecutions	
	Improvement	Deferred	Prohibition	Total	Convictions	Total Informations
2007/08	48	2	12	62	7	10
2006/07	32	0	18	50	14	16

Storage Of Frozen & Refrigerated Goods

	Number of Notices				Number of Prosecutions	
	Improvement	Deferred	Prohibition	Total	Convictions	Total Informations
2007/08	0	0	0	0	1	1
2006/07	0	0	0	0	0	0

As part of the LAPS agreement, HSE have agreed to provide BFFF with the details of Enforcement Notices and prosecutions specifically related to our industry, split into the same industry sectors as the injury statistics.

Total Informations relates to what regulation a company is being prosecuted under. For example, if a company is being prosecuted under S1 of the HSWA and the S3 of the LOLER regs then two informations need to be laid before the court. So in this example, the prosecution had two informations. A prosecution will always have at least one information but may have many depending on the number of breaches of law.

HSE FOOD INDUSTRY CASE STUDIES

Action

As part of our work with our partners under the LAPS agreement (HSE and Boston Local Authority), we are now able to provide detailed case studies on incidents within our industry.

WORKING AT HEIGHT - FROZEN FOOD MANUFACTURER

Summary

The main partner in a frozen food manufacturer was prosecuted following an accident to an employee who fell from a ladder while filling gaps between an existing and new factory building.

The employee was asked to fill a number of gaps located between an existing factory building, new breezeblock walls and link roof (about 3m high) and some new freezers.

Initially, he tried to fill the gaps from within the freezer area as it would have been lower and easier to see the gaps. He was working alone and used a stepladder to access the work area. Unfortunately the expanding foam would not adhere due to the condensation within the area, so he went outside to complete the task.

He set a single length aluminium ladder against the wall of the factory. The ladder did not have stabilisers and was not secured by being tied-in or footed. He climbed up the ladder holding the spray gun of expanding foam. After completing the job, he decided to double check to see that all the holes had been filled. As he climbed the ladder again it either slipped or he fell, breaking both his wrists as he hit the ground. He was off work for 10 weeks as a result of his injuries.

There was no risk assessment for working at height and the employee was not given any instructions on how to do the task or what equipment to use. In the six months prior to the accident, the partnership had appointed a safety officer whose role included carrying out risk assessments.

However, the safety officer was not given sufficient time to fully carry out the role and at the time of the accident had not yet assessed work at height activities.

The partner was prosecuted under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for failing to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of the employee. He was found guilty and fined £6,000, with an additional £5,000 in costs awarded against him.

Advice

A third of all reported fall-from-height incidents involve ladders and stepladders – on average this accounts for 14 deaths and 1200 major injuries to workers each year. Many of these injuries are caused by inappropriate or incorrect use of equipment and could be easily avoided.

Where work at height is necessary you need to justify whether a ladder is the most suitable access equipment compared to other access equipment options. You do this by using risk assessment and the hierarchy of controls (firstly to avoid work at height where possible; then to prevent falls from height; and, failing that, to reduce the consequences of a fall).

If climbing a ladder is the best option, the risk assessment should include checking that it is in good condition and that there is a firm, level base with which to support it (e.g. by roping it to a suitable support). Ladders are acceptable for jobs that can be done quickly and with a low level of risk, but the risks increase significantly when using a ladder for long periods, moving it frequently or climbing repeatedly to carry tools or work materials.

As with all work equipment, users need adequate information and training to be able to use ladders and stepladders safely. Adequate supervision is needed so that safe practices continue to be used.

HSE have a guide on the safe use of ladders and stepladders aimed at employers, the self-employed and people who work from ladders [click here](#). Further information is also available on the HSE website [click here](#).

ACCESS TO MACHINERY - LOGISTICS COMPANY

Summary

A logistics company in Scotland were prosecuted following an accident to an employee who was injured while attempting to free a pallet, which had become jammed on the hoist of an automatic palletiser.

During handover from the nightshift, the employee was informed there had been problems with empty pallets sticking at the pallet hoist - in fact there was a pallet lying vertically against the cable tray and the table of the pallet hoist at handover. He, along with the team leader from the previous shift, had isolated the machine, straightened the pallet and then re-started the machine.

Shortly afterwards another pallet stuck, so he and another worker went through the maintenance gate in the perimeter fencing to see what was happening.

This particular access gate was not interlocked or locked and at the time of the incident was lying open, with the machine fully operating. They discovered there was a kink in the mesh chain bed of the pallet hoist conveyor, so turned off the power while they repaired it.

After re-starting the machine another pallet had become stuck, so he went through the access gate to nudge it. On this occasion the pallet jumped upwards and trapped his hand against the cable tray, amputating the tip of the little finger of his right hand.

The employee was able to gain access to the moving machinery through a non-interlocked access gate, which had not been identified as a hazard as no suitable and sufficient risk assessment had been prepared by the company. The access gate used by the injured person was known to open without stopping the moving parts of the machine.

In spite of this fact, there was no system in place to ensure that it remained securely closed whilst not in use.

Action

The company were prosecuted under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for failing to ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health and safety of their employees. They were found guilty and fined £5,000.

Advice

Unguarded or inadequately guarded machines are a source of numerous serious accidents. Blockages on palletisers are also a common occurrence. It is therefore foreseeable that operators may require entry to the danger zone to clear blockages. This must be carried out in accordance with a safe system of work to ensure that the risks to the operator are controlled.

Access into a palletiser or depalletiser should be via a dedicated route other than the pallet load entry/exit openings. Doors provided for this purpose should be safeguarded using interlocking devices with guard locking, and openings should have suitable electrosensitive protective equipment (ESPE) acting as a trip device.

Further information is available in HSE Information Sheet FIS27 - Packaging machinery: Safeguarding palletisers and depalletisers (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/fis27.pdf).

HSE CAMPAIGNS

During each HSE campaign, Inspectors visiting premises will focus on the key campaign areas and assess the standards, offer advice and enforce applicable legislation. It is also common during major campaigns that certain businesses will be targeted for inspection based on their activity i.e. if their work area is relevant to the current campaign.

LADDER EXCHANGE CAMPAIGN

The HSE recently launched its 2009 Ladder Exchange Initiative, intended to help reduce the number of deaths and injuries resulting from falls from height. The campaign will run until 31 December 2009 and aims to encourage people to trade in old, damaged and broken ladders by.

As of September 2009, both HSE and Local Authority inspectors may include ladder checks as part of their inspections and they will take appropriate enforcement action, which may include prohibiting their use.

Over 5,500 ladders have already been exchanged under the initiative since it first launched in 2007. From now until 31 December 2009 anyone with a broken, damaged or bent ladder can part exchange it for a new one with discounts of up to 50%.

HSE FOCUS FOR FOOD MANUFACTURE INDUSTRY

The HSE's main enforcement focus for the food manufacture industry in 2009/2010 remains the management of health and safety and, in particular director/board level leadership and worker involvement. Other topics are:

- Migrant Workers and other vulnerable workers. Good management practice and compliance with legal responsibilities;
- Risk Management. Competent management in terms of basic, sensible and proportionate health and safety also competency of any health and safety consultants contracted;

- Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). Whether tasks causing high risk of manual handling injuries and consequent ill health have been addressed, including awareness of upper limb disorders (ULDs) and use of available tools for assessing repetitive injuries;
- Noise and Vibration. good practice in controlling noise and vibration, and health surveillance;
- Falls from Height. Preventing falls from height by using appropriate equipment and safeguards;
- Dermatitis. Prevention of control of dermatitis caused by contact with food products, cleaning agents etc by elimination of the risk where possible, skin checks, hand-care regime and correct glove selection and use;
- Machinery. E.g. compliance with Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations;
- Loading and Unloading of Vehicles. Management of workplace transport around loading bays and MSD/back injury prevention;
- Slips and Trips. Management of control measures to prevent injuries caused by slipping on food products, wet floors etc.
- Occupational Asthma. Prevention of occupational asthma from flour and other dusts.

MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR FIRST AID AT WORK

The HSE is making changes to the First Aid at Work (FAW) training regime to make it more flexible, with the aim of saving businesses time and money, without compromising health and safety.

On 1 October 2009, the HSE published new guidance, which will see the mandatory four-day FAW training courses reduced to three days. There will also be an option for a one-day course for smaller businesses. However, all FAW-qualified first aiders will still have to attend a two-day re-qualification course every three years.

The changes have been made following feedback from businesses across Great Britain. Employers recognised the need for first-aid training but were concerned about releasing employees for four days.

The new guidance also suggests that refresher training taken annually would be beneficial to first aiders and their employers. All training companies have to be approved by the HSE. The approval list can be viewed by clicking [here](#) .

FUTURE EVENTS

Business advice open days are run throughout the year. The open days cover all aspects of business including Health and Safety issues. They are manned by a full team of business experts who aim to help businesses to meet and understand their legal responsibilities. They also aim to help businesses to enhance their operations through the use of new technology and better marketing techniques.

Events October - December 2009 are as follows:

16 September 2009 – Birmingham
 17 September 2009 – Aldershot
 24 September 2009 – Basingstoke
 1 October 2009 – Bournemouth
 6 October 2009 – London
 15 October 2009 – Yeovil
 5 November 2009 – Shepton Mallett
 12 November 2009 – Barnsley
 18 November 2009 – Taunton
 4 February 2010 – Ipswich
 10 February 2010 – Cheltenham

Other events for the same period are:

6-7 October - Health & Safety 2009 – Bolton
 15 October - Coping with Health & Safety Legislation: Manual Handling, COSHH and Work Equipment – Cumbria

For more details and online booking click [here](#)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

REVIEW OF THE WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS 2005

The House of Lords is to examine the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR) to assess how they have been implemented by the Government, and their impact on those affected by them.

The review was initiated by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Merits of Statutory Instruments, which has issued a call for evidence from organisations and individuals with experience of the WAHR to determine how they have worked, and if their implementation and impact have been as expected.

Issues that the Committee will examine include:

- whether the legislation has achieved its stated objective of fewer accidents
- the cost of implementing the Regulations — whether more or less than originally anticipated by the Government
- whether there have been any unintended consequences in the way the legislation has worked.

The WAHR was the product of the European Directive on Temporary Work at Height (2001/45/EC), which was adopted by the EU in response to the accident record on falls from height across Member States.

There was some criticism at the time over “gold-plating” of the legislation by the HSE, which transformed the relatively short Directive into a vast consultation document, and the Regulations were somewhat contentious due to their premise that all work at height should be avoided where possible.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

COMPENSATION FOR LONG HOURS AT DESK AFTER BLOOD CLOT

Thompsons Solicitors, has announced it has secured "a substantial sum in compensation" for an administrator who suffered a life threatening blood clot, which her lawyers attribute to long hours sitting at her desk.

Thompsons says Angela Lamberton, a 53-year-old administrative assistant, developed the clot behind her knee after her working routine was changed so she was effectively "tied to her desk". Her lawyers claim that targets were set so employees had to complete a certain amount of work and routines were changed so staff no longer had to leave their desk to complete their job.

Ms Lamberton had previously suffered a previous blood clot and although it was successfully treated and she no longer had to take medication, she had been told by doctors to take breaks from her desk every 15 minutes. Her lawyers said the old work routine meant she was naturally taking those breaks to collect work from the printer. However, when the new system was put in place, she apparently complained to her line manager but was told she must abide by the new rules.

According to Thompsons, within weeks she started to suffer pains in her legs and her GP diagnosed a blood clot, requiring emergency treatment to disperse it and four months off work. It is predicted that she will have to take medication for the rest of her life to avoid another potentially fatal clot from developing.

The administrator contacted her union, which instructed its lawyers Thompsons Solicitors to pursue a claim for compensation. Her employer admitted liability and settled the claim out of court.

WARNING ON MISUSE OF FORK-LIFTS

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned companies of the importance of implementing safe systems for lifting loads and using suitable lifting equipment for the job, following the prosecution of a Birmingham company after an incident in which a worker was seriously injured by a load, which fell from a fork-lift truck.

On 3 November 2008, a one-tonne machine was being raised by a fork-lift truck for maintenance, at the premises of a company in Birmingham. The machine subsequently fell off the forks, hitting employee Kevin Kelly who was working underneath the machine.

Fortunately, Mr Kelly was not crushed by the falling load, but nevertheless suffered serious back injuries, which required immediate surgery, and he has not worked since the incident.

At a hearing at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 28 August 2009, the company was ordered to pay £8000 in fines, as well as £3500 in court costs, after pleading guilty to breaching s.2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, which covers the duty of the employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all the employees.

Commenting on the case, HSE Inspector Paul Smith said, "Mr Kelly was very lucky not to have been trapped and crushed by the falling machine and suffering more serious injuries, or even death ...This case should be a warning to all companies undertaking non-routine and one-off jobs that time spent thinking about how to do the job safely with the right equipment will ultimately save time and costs, and mostly importantly save lives."

WORKER LOST THREE FINGERS IN MACHINERY

The owners of a meat processing plant have been convicted of failing to have a safe isolation procedure in place for machinery, after a worker lost three fingers when a machine he was attempting to repair started up.

In June 2008, the employee, Steven Glass, was working on an Endoline tape packaging machine, which had been under repair. When it would not work, he attempted to fix it.

As the machine could not be properly isolated to prevent accidental operation, it started, trapping three of his fingers, which were amputated.

Later at hospital, one finger was successfully reattached. Mr Glass no longer works for the company and since the accident the company has been taken over, with significant improvements in health and safety.

The court heard that a year before the accident, the company commissioned an electrical inspection of their premises which identified 866 faults with the electrics and wiring system, of which nearly 200 were rated as most urgent. By the time of the accident, little or no work had been done to rectify these faults.

Three months before the accident, HSE inspectors had visited the plant and told the company they must have a procedure in place to ensure machinery could be properly isolated while being repaired. This had not been carried out at the time of the accident.

At Ayr Sheriff Court on 2 July 2009, the company was fined £30,000 after pleading guilty to breaching various sections of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, pertaining to the duty of the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all the employees, as well as to provide the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety of employees.

BFFF invites you to attend their ground breaking Slips Seminar at Aston Villa FC on 28 October 2009

The seminar is provided in-conjunction with the HSE and Health & Safety Laboratories. Hear and learn about the work of the HSL and from practical industry case studies.

Topics to be covered:

- The Case for Slips including industry Statistics and Costs
- Slip Potential - The Ingredients that go into the Pie
- A Producer's Case Study
- Reliable Floor Testing
- A Producer's Case Study
- Slip Resistant Footwear: What to Look For and the Importance of Effective Floor Cleaning
- Asda - The Retail & Distribution Approach
- The Slips Assessment Tool & Slips & Trips e-learning Package
- Risk Assessment & Enforcement

To register interest/find out more email hazelcranidge@bfff.co.uk or click [here](#) to download a booking form

GUIDANCE

HSE MAKES 'L' AND 'HSG' SERIES PUBLICATIONS FREELY AVAILABLE

The HSE have made around 250 of their Legal and Health and Safety Guidance Series publications ('L' and 'HSG' Series) available for free electronic download.

HSE has made the information available to help employers better understand their legal duties and the health and safety precautions they need to take and to help safety representatives in maintaining and improving health and safety in the workplace.

Printed versions remain available to purchase from HSE Books. It should be borne in mind that crown copyright will still apply and organisations wishing to reproduce the information will still need an appropriate licence from the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI).

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE

Worker safety in the UK has often been undermined by the increasing amount of counterfeit and illegal personal protective equipment (PPE) entering the country.

Frequently, the product performs badly, is incorrectly CE marked and does not meet the standard's performance claims, while users of the product will be unaware of the problem. The use of fake products in the workplace can lead to poor protection for employees and can put health and lives at risk.

The British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) has launched, the "BSIF Registered Safety Supplier Scheme". Its aim is to advise buyers where they can obtain genuine safety equipment.

Suppliers wishing to be members of the scheme must demonstrate their commitment to ethical trading, and make a legally binding declaration that the safety equipment offered meets the appropriate standards, fully complies with the PPE regulations and is appropriately CE marked.

They will also be subject to standards audits and their declarations will be available in the public domain.

In return, registered organisations may display the BSIF Registered Safety Supplier Scheme shield as an assurance to their customers that their products are genuine and comply with regulations.

HELP FOR MANAGERS DEALING WITH RECESSION STRESS

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has produced new guidance on how management should deal with increased levels of stress as a result of the recession and associated difficult situations, based on research carried out with the HSE.

Line Management Behaviour and Stress at Work offers advice to managers who are increasingly having to deal with stressed-out team members. Click [here](#) to view.

The guide is based on the competency framework developed jointly by the CIPD and the HSE to enable line managers to work on the skills required to reduce and prevent stress at work.

WELL-BEING AT WORK

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) recently conducted a snapshot survey of employers on the subject of well-being at work, which indicated that the issue remains a priority for employers, despite the recession, but that there are concerns about the Government's new fit note.

Responses collected from employers in both the public and private sectors show that they recognise the importance of continuing to focus on staff well-being in the downturn, through providing training, improving communication at all levels and the creation or implementation of solid underlying human resources policies. For more details and to see the full article click [here](#).

DANGER OF RUNNING OUT OF FUEL ON MOTORWAYS

The Highways Agency recently highlighted the dangers of running out of fuels on motorways, urging drivers to check their fuel levels before setting off on journeys.

According to the Agency's statistics, a total of 15,788 drivers ran out of fuel on England's motorways between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2009 — an average of 43 every day. Breaking down on the motorway causes disruption to journeys and road users can put the driver, as well as other drivers, at risk.

To reduce the inconvenience and also the hazards involved, the Agency, supported by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), is calling on drivers to check their fuel levels before setting off on journeys.

EMPLOYERS WARNED ON SECOND WAVE OF SWINE FLU

A new report published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Business Continuity Institute (BCI) has warned UK businesses to prepare for staff absence rates of up to 50%, for periods of between two and four weeks this autumn and winter, as the expected second wave of swine flu strikes.

The report advises that companies should consider, in their contingency planning arrangements, the returning of schools from the summer, since some health experts believe that this factor could help trigger the expected second wave of swine flu.

The new guide, entitled Risk and Business Continuity Management, makes it clear that in the event of a widely predicted second and more serious wave of swine flu, many businesses will see a significant increase in absence rates beyond those enforced through illness alone, with possible widespread closures of school and childcare facilities.

The guidance warns businesses to:

- prioritise essential activities
- provide cross training of staff in critical areas so employees have the skills to fill in for absent colleagues
- consider remote working to prevent spread of infection
- consider reducing human contact for those with key skills
- consider increasing customer self-service options such as telephone and online transactions
- keep on top of government advice and adapt plans to reflect changes
- communicate plans with staff, customers and suppliers
- follow public health agency advice on efficient ways to contain the virus
- provide a safe workplace by implementing rules on health reporting, office and personal hygiene, protective equipment, social distancing and working hours.

For more information visit the CIPD website: <http://www.cipd.co.uk>

FIGURES PUBLISHED ON FATAL INJURIES TO BRITISH WORKERS

The HSE has recently published its latest figures on the number of people killed at work in Britain in the period 2008/09, concluding that the figures have fallen to a "record low".

The provisional data shows that 180 workers were killed between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009, down from 233 in 2007/08, and 17% lower than the previous lowest total of 217, recorded in 2005/06.

The HSE has also hailed "sizeable falls" in some of the historically most dangerous industries in Britain, including:

- 26 fatal injuries to agricultural workers being recorded (a large reduction in the 46 recorded in 2007/08)
- 53 fatal injuries to construction workers (a significant fall from the 72 recorded in 2007/08)

- 63 fatal injuries to services workers recorded (a fall from 73, the figure for 2007/08)
- 32 fatal injuries to manufacturing workers, representing a slight fall from 33.

Introducing the figures, Judith Hackitt, the HSE Chair, acknowledged that statistics on fatal injuries could not offer “the whole picture”. She said, “Work-related ill health is a significant problem and accounts for four times more working days lost than workplace injury, so there is still a major challenge we all face to prevent death, injury and ill health in all of our workplaces.”

NEW TEMPERATURE WEBSITE

The HSE has launched a new temperature website area, containing information about how the temperature of the environment staff work in can affect them, and advice on how to manage related issues.

The HSE points out that the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 lay down particular requirements for most aspects of the working environment and that regulation 7 deals specifically with the temperature in indoor workplaces, requiring that during working hours, temperatures in workplaces inside buildings should be reasonable.

The associated Approved Code of Practice to the Regulations provides further details and notes that: “The temperature in workrooms should provide reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing. Where such a temperature is impractical because of hot or cold processes, all reasonable steps should be taken to achieve a temperature which is as close as possible to comfortable.”

The HSE previously defined thermal comfort in the workplace as follows, noting that: “An acceptable zone of thermal comfort for most people in the UK lies roughly between 13°C (56°F) and 30°C (86°F), with acceptable temperatures for more strenuous work activities concentrated towards the bottom end of the range, and more sedentary activities towards the higher end.”

The website, which offers a wide range of information, including a managers' guide, a workers' guide and advice on conducting risk assessments, can be accessed at www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/index.htm

LITERACY PROBLEMS COULD BE DEADLY FOR BUSINESS

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has warned that literacy problems in the workforce could have deadly consequences in the health and safety context.

The safety body was quoting recent figures, which indicate that over a million people aged over 16 in England do not have the reading age expected of seven-year-olds. This, IOSH says, could have major implications for employees' safety.

Following International Literacy Day, which took place on 8 September 2009, IOSH urged businesses not to assume that written down health and safety instructions will be understood by all.

The safety body says the key is to always make sure employees understand before letting them get on with work, and to encourage workers to not be embarrassed to ask questions if they do not understand something.

Nattasha Freeman, President of IOSH, said, “Being able to read is something many of us take for granted. But there are many people in the workplace with low levels of literacy, which means we must not just rely on written information or even verbal instructions.”

Ms Freeman also highlighted the issue of foreign workers.

She said, “There's also been a huge increase in workers who don't speak English as their first language, and we have to make sure we are able to communicate, particularly on health and safety, with these members of staff.”

RR730 - THE ASBESTOS SURVEY

The Asbestos Survey was established to monitor the long-term health of workers covered by regulations to control occupational exposure to asbestos. The aim of this report was to provide an updated analysis of mortality among asbestos workers, to investigate which causes of death were associated with exposure to asbestos, and to undertake a more detailed analysis of the stripping/removal workers.

From 1971, workers were recruited during initially voluntary and later statutory medical examinations.

During the medical, a brief questionnaire was completed, and participants were then flagged for death registrations. There were 15,496 deaths among the 98,912 workers included in the analysis. All cause mortality was significantly higher than in the general population.

Known associations between asbestos exposure and mortality from lung, peritoneal and pleural cancers, mesothelioma and asbestosis were confirmed, and some evidence of associations with stroke and stomach cancer mortality were observed. Limited evidence suggested that asbestos-related disease risk may be lower among those first exposed in more recent times.

Among the removal workers, deaths were elevated for all causes, all cancers including lung cancer, mesothelioma, and circulatory disease. Spending more than 40 hours per week in a stripping enclosure increased the risk of all cause, circulatory disease, and ischaemic heart disease mortality. However the different dust suppression techniques and respirator types did not affect mortality rates. Longer follow-up will allow the impact of recent regulations on the health of asbestos workers to be assessed.

This report and the work it describes were funded by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Its contents, including any opinions and/or conclusions expressed, are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect HSE policy.

To view the full report click [here](#)

SAFETY OF WI-FI EMISSIONS

Scientists from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) have measured radio signals generated by laptop computers using wi-fi and have concluded that exposure levels are well within internationally accepted exposure guidelines and less than levels from mobile phones.

The research project began, following public concerns over their use, particularly in schools. Investigating the strength of the radiowaves around laptops using wi-fi at a specially adapted laboratory at the HPA's Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards in Oxfordshire, scientists found only very small output powers even when the devices were transmitting continuously.

However, teaching unions have said that the international guidelines are out of date and that the long-term effects, taking into account length of exposure as well as levels, have not yet been determined. They have also pointed out that wi-fi systems were really designed for communication on the move and may not be necessary elsewhere as cable systems are sufficient.

During ongoing further research, the scientists are planning to measure how the output power is affected by the software and the work being done on the computers.

The HPA has said that, on the basis of current scientific information, exposures from wi-fi equipment satisfy international guidelines, and that there is no consistent evidence of health effects from exposures below guideline levels and no reason why people should not use wi-fi equipment.

WORKPLACE TRANSPORT - HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT!

For the price of a local phonecall, FTA supported by the HSE provides a **free** and **confidential** advice service for **anyone** involved in Workplace Transport. The service is operated by trained, experienced advisors who will answer queries covering all Workplace Transport issues.

If you need to know:

- If a driver has the right training,
- If a vehicle is operated safely,
- If a transport workplace is a safe environment

Or you just want to check the latest legislation the number you want is: **0870 099 0099**

Do you have the solution to someone else's Work Place problem or do you want to discuss your ideas with people facing the same issues you do?

Debate safety topics or raise the burning issue of the day at the Work Place Transport Forum: <http://www.wptsforum.org>

The service is free and confidential so logon and post today.

You can also visit the Workplace Transport page on the HSE Website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/>

'Keep it Safe' is now available to all BFFF members via the Health & Safety page of the 'Members Only' section of our website

<http://www.bfff.co.uk/members>

Login details have been provided to our main and Health & Safety contacts at each member company.

Back copies of 'Keep it Safe' are also available under the Health & Safety section of the website.

BFFF invites you to attend their ground breaking Slips Seminar at Aston Villa FC on 28 October 2009

The seminar is provided in-conjunction with the HSE and Health & Safety Laboratories. Hear and learn about the work of the HSL and from practical industry case studies.

Topics to be covered:

- The Case for Slips including industry Statistics and Costs
- Slip Potential - The Ingredients that go into the Pie
- A Producer's Case Study
- Reliable Floor Testing
- A Producer's Case Study
- Slip Resistant Footwear: What to Look For and the Importance of Effective Floor Cleaning
- Asda - The Retail & Distribution Approach
- The Slips Assessment Tool & Slips & Trips e-learning Package
- Risk Assessment & Enforcement

To register interest/find out more email hazelcranidge@bfff.co.uk or click [here](#) to download a booking form