

Newsletter

Issue 2 - July 2010



Health & Safety Special

Welcome to **Business Regulation Solutions'** second newsletter. This edition is devoted to Health and Safety matters with contributions from Environmental Health Officers across Greater Manchester and the Health & Safety Executive. We aim to keep businesses informed about the latest services, new legal requirements, scams, helpful tips and guidance to comply with the law and other matters that may affect your business.

Please read on... don't wait to find out the hard way!

Asbestos The Hidden Killer

Building on the success last year of the "Asbestos – The Hidden Killer" campaign the Health and Safety Executive in the North West will continue raising awareness of the duty to manage asbestos in workplaces.

Asbestos is the UK's single biggest work based killer. It accounts for an estimated 4,000 deaths a year in Great Britain, that's greater than the number of people killed each year in road accidents. A quarter of those dying are tradesmen or maintenance workers who, while doing their jobs, had unknowingly disturbed and breathed in asbestos.

The duty to manage asbestos covers all non-domestic premises. So all industrial, commercial or public buildings such as factories, warehouses, offices, shops, hospitals and schools have a duty to manage asbestos on their premises.

To help manage asbestos there are 3 essential steps :

- Find out whether your premises contains asbestos, and, if so, where it is and what condition it is in. If in doubt, materials must be presumed to contain asbestos.
- Assess the risk.
- Make a plan to manage that risk and act on it.

Asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed. If it is safely managed and contained, it doesn't present a health hazard.

Further Information is available from:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm>



Sound Advice

In order to protect workers in Great Britain from the problems associated with work-related noise, the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 were introduced, replacing the 1989 Regulations. The new regulations came into force for general industry on the 6th April 2006 and for the entertainment sector, where live music or recorded music is played in April 2008.

Employers are required to prevent or reduce the risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work. According to the HSE, the regulations overall require an employer to:

- Assess the risks to employees from noise at work.
- Take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks.
- Provide employees with hearing protection if you cannot reduce the noise.
- Exposure enough by using other methods.
- Make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded.
- Provide employees with information, instruction and training.
- Carry out health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

The new regulations reduces the action levels at which employers must take action to control the risk of noise affecting their employees. The lower exposure action value for daily or weekly personal noise exposure is **reduced from 85 to 80 dB(A)** and the upper exposure action value is **reduced from 90 to 85 dB(A)**.

For further information regarding meeting your obligations with regard to noise at work please see:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index.htm> or contact your local Environmental Health Department.



Electricity at Work

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 apply to all work places.

Poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to people being electrocuted or cause fires in the workplace. Most accidents can be avoided by taking simple precautions and through good planning using the following guidance:

Maintenance of Portable Electrical Equipment

Maintenance includes visual inspection, testing, repair or replacement. It determines whether the equipment is serviceable or if remedial action is needed. Cost-effective maintenance is achieved by a combination of actions applied at three levels:

- 1 Checks by the user
- 2 Visual inspection by a person appointed to do this
- 3 Combined inspection and tests by a competent person or by a contractor.

This should be followed up by monitoring the effectiveness of the system, and action taken where faults are found, particularly if fault levels or types are found repeatedly.

1 User Checks

Users should be provided with basic training to look critically at all equipment in use. They should visually check for signs that the equipment is not in a sound condition. Checks apply to extension leads, plugs and sockets. Faults should be reported to management and the equipment taken out of use immediately. Equipment must not be used until rectified by a competent person.

2 Formal Visual Checks

This is the most important part of the maintenance system and should be carried out by a competent person. Most faults can be picked up in this way.

The inspections should be carried out at regular intervals. The period between inspections can vary considerably depending on the type of equipment, the conditions of use and on the environment.

Faulty equipment should be taken out of service until repaired and tested if necessary. The pattern of faults found can be used to indicate whether:

- The right equipment is being selected for the job
- Further protection may be necessary in a harsh environment
- The equipment is being misused

3 Combined Inspection and Tests

The above checks will reveal most faults. Routine inspection and testing, together with visual inspection can detect other faults such as loss of earth integrity; e.g. broken earth wire within a cable, or deterioration of insulation integrity.

Frequency of Inspection and of Combined Inspection and Testing

The frequency of inspection and testing depends on the assessment of risk. The HSE provides detailed guidance in their booklet '**Maintaining Portable and Transportable Electrical Equipment**' (HSG107). Factors to consider when making the assessment include the following:

- Type of equipment and whether or not it is hand held.
- Manufacturer's recommendations.
- Initial integrity and soundness of equipment.
- Age of equipment.
- Working environment, is it wet or dusty or the likelihood of damage.
- Frequency of use and the duty cycle of the equipment.
- Foreseeable abuse of equipment.
- Effects of any modifications or repairs to the equipment.
- Analysis of previous records of maintenance, including both formal inspection and combined inspection and testing.



Preventing Violence & Improving Crime Prevention in the Workplace

Any business which exchanges money with the public is potentially at risk of robbery, shop lifting, violence or verbal abuse.

As an employer you have a general duty to protect your employees from workplace risks which include retail violence. In order to minimize the chance of incidents occurring there are some basic crime reduction tips that can be used to safe guard you, your employees and your business.

Cash Management

By reducing the amount of money that is readily available and ensuring that cash can't be accessed quickly, potential robbers will look elsewhere if the risks for them outweigh the gain.

- Keep the amount in the till(s) to a minimum. Set a limit with staff and enforce it rigorously.
- Skim £20.00 notes from the till and put them into the main safe or consider installing a drop safe close to the till for ease.
- If you have more than £400 on the premises at any one time, you need a time delay safe or safe that cannot be opened by staff on the premises. Robbers know instinctively if staff have or don't have access to the safe, and will not want to wait around for the safe to be opened.
- Make sure cash is counted at the end of the working day with the doors locked or in a secure room, out of public view.

Banking

Make it difficult for potential robbers to establish a pattern of your banking routine.

- If you do your own banking make sure that you vary the days and times.
- Use a different bag and cover up any identifying clothing if worn.
- Where possible travel by car to the bank. Lone banking on foot should be avoided.

Access Control

Stop robbers from barging into your premises and give staff time to take evasive action.

- A remote control door lock operated from the counter is a good deterrent.

Good Visibility

It is important that you have a clear line of site from the counter area to the door so you can see who is coming into the premises.

- Keep posters on doors and windows to a minimum or consider installing an external camera.

Signage

Most robberies are pre-planned so offenders will scan premises before they strike. If they see you have a lot of security measures they will go elsewhere.

- Advertise security measures you have in place eg time delay safe, CCTV, cash detection devices, etc.

Further useful resources include Bury Council's retail guidance information pack and the HSEs violence toolkit which are free to access at:

www.bury.gov.uk/business/healthandsafety/reduceviolence.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/

The Health and Safety team at Bury Council, provide free tailored guidance and works alongside Greater Manchester Police and other partners. For more information contact Ben Thomson (Tel. 0161 2537260) or Anne Spencer (Tel. 0161 2536991) 3 Knowsley Place, Duke Street, Bury, BL9 0EJ



How safe is your load?

If a vehicle is not loaded correctly it can cause serious injuries, deaths and has led to a number of road traffic accidents. Every year over 1200 people are injured because of unsafe loads and they cost businesses millions of pounds in damaged goods.

Loading & unloading - Employers should plan loading and unloading to avoid accidents and the right equipment should be available to load and unload the vehicle safely. Goods should always be loaded to the headboard to avoid the load moving.

Keep the vehicle safe - Carry out pre-use checks on your vehicle and report any damage or anything that you feel might cause an accident, for example damaged straps, door hinges, etc. Clean up spills and dirt to stop people slipping and on refrigerated vehicles check for ice or water on the floor.

Keeping staff safe - There should be safe systems of work in place for all loading and unloading. There must be a reporting system so that the problems can be fixed. Staff must be trained in the correct loading procedures and adequate personal protective equipment should be provided such as safety footwear.

For further information visit www.hse.gov.uk/loadsafety

Slips - A Major Cause of Accidents

Businesses can now access a great new interactive tool on the Health and Safety Executive website called STEP to help prevent slips and trips in the workplace.

Slips and trips are the most common of workplace hazards and make up over a third of all major injuries. Over 10,000 workers suffered serious injury because of a slip or trip last year.

As well as the personal cost, accidents can leave businesses shorthanded and can cost money in sick pay, compensation claims and increased insurance costs.

Slip and trip accidents can happen for a number of reasons, however most slips occur in wet or contaminated conditions and are due to poor housekeeping. The solutions are often simple and cost effective.

The new HSE tool STEP (The Slips and Trips eLearning Package) explains how slips and trips occur and how to reduce accidents. The package includes quizzes, videos, animations, case studies and interactive sequences to enhance the learning experience.

So why not check it out at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/step/index.htm>

Dispelling the Myths

Sensible Risk

Local Authorities, HSE and others are too often criticised for making "nannying" health and safety decisions that stop people living their lives. Enforcing Authorities want to save lives, not stop them, through addressing poor management of risk that damages lives and the economy.

Local Authorities are committed to 'sensible risk management', practical steps to protect people from real harm and suffering - not bureaucratic back covering.

10 Principles of Sensible Risk Management

Sensible risk management **is** about:

- Ensuring that workers and the public are properly protected.
- Providing overall benefit to society by balancing benefits and risks, with a focus on reducing real risks – both those which arise more often and those with serious consequences.
- Enabling innovation and learning not stifling them
- Ensuring that those who create risks manage them responsibly and understand that failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to robust action.
- Enabling individuals to understand that as well as the right to protection, they also have to exercise responsibility.

Sensible risk management **is not** about:

- Creating a totally risk free society.
- Generating useless paperwork mountains.
- Scaring people by exaggerating or publicising trivial risks.
- Stopping important recreational and learning activities for individuals where the risks are managed
- Reducing protection of people from risks that cause real harm and suffering.

How can you help?

Demonstrate your support for these principles by putting them into action, in the way you manage health and safety risks.

Here are the 5 steps to Risk Assessment. You can access more details on how to conduct a Risk Assessment on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk

Step 1 Identify the hazards.

Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how.

Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.

Step 4 Record your findings and implement them.

Step 5 Review your assessment and update if necessary.

Business and Regulators Working Together

Manchester City Council has been working for some months with the Co-operative Group, a major business with headquarters in the City and recently participated in four sessions with their area Health and Safety Managers and representatives from their Insurance Team to demystify the enforcers' role. The sessions which were also supported by officers from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service included explaining the enforcers' role in incident investigation in a short session on the first day and then participating in a role play in a mock investigation on the second day. This was a substantial commitment on behalf of the business to put all their Area Managers through the training.

The sessions enabled the Co-operative Group to better understand the regulator's perspective and enabled the participating officers to gain a better understanding of issues facing an organisation operating across the whole country. A major success of this work was that there was openness and transparency by all parties. A key issue raised was the difference between civil claims for compensation that businesses may face and compliance with health and safety legislation.

This initial partnership approach is one element of a more extensive piece of partnership work that continues and will help to continue to dispel the myths.

Sunbed Ban for Under 18's to Become Law

Businesses in Greater Manchester which provide ultra-violet sun tanning equipment for public use are being visited by Local Authority Enforcement Officers.

The aims of the visits are to assess the current working practices regarding the use of sunbeds and to provide advice to the businesses in line with the guidance document 'Reducing health risks from the use of ultraviolet (UV) tanning equipment' (INDG209) which has been produced by the Health & Safety Executive. The guidance document was revised in 2009 and provides excellent guidance for sunbed operators.

Up until recently there has been limited legislation regulating the use of sunbeds, however, a private members bill has recently been passed by the House of Lords and the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 will come into force on 8 April 2011. This legislation imposes a ban on under 18 year olds from using sunbeds, as well as requiring sunbed users to wear protective eyewear and sunbed operators to provide comprehensive information to all customers about the health risks associated with using sunbeds.

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of exposure to UV light, yet large numbers of adolescents are using sunbeds. Research recently carried out by Cancer Research UK (CRUK) established that 6% of 11-17 year olds in England had used a sunbed. It is also reported by the International Agency for research on cancer that the use of sunbeds before the age of 35 is associated with a 75% increase in the risk of developing melanoma.



Don't gamble with safety! New National Code for Safety & Security in Betting Shops

A national standard for betting shop safety has been launched after 2 years of joint working involving bookmakers, environmental health officers, the police and trade unions.

The document was produced to help all UK bookmakers tackle issues of violence ranging from assault, abuse and anti-social behaviour to more serious crime such as armed robbery. Unfortunately, many high street shops are increasingly becoming victims of robbery and other forms of violence and bookmakers are no exception.

The new national standard offers all betting shop operators, both large and small, excellent guidance and advice on keeping staff and premises safe and secure. It will also help operators comply with their legal duty to protect staff and customers.

The guidance recognises that not every betting shop is the same and there are different risks depending on local circumstances. It sets out:

- The minimum levels of safety and security that should be in place in all shops.
- How to conduct a shop-specific risk assessment to identify if additional levels of safety or security are appropriate.

The document is split into five sections covering:

- Standards aimed at reducing violence in general
- Steps to reducing risks
- Key principles of crime reduction
- National standards that define specific safety and security measures
- Staff training

There are also helpful templates such as an example risk assessment and an incident report form.

All bookmakers should receive a copy of the document in the next few weeks. For further information, please contact Gary Parkinson, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council on 01706 924138.

Maintaining Safe Workplaces

It is estimated that maintenance related accidents account for 25-30% of all manufacturing industry fatalities and major injuries in Britain. Maintenance plays a vital role in any workplace eliminating workplace hazards and creating safer and healthier working conditions.

On 21 June 2010 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) launched the UK's participation in the The European Healthy Workplace Campaign for 2010 - 2011 'Safe Maintenance'. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of safe maintenance by encouraging an integrated and structured approach to maintenance by businesses.

To drive forward the UK campaign, the HSE has included a new safe maintenance section on their website featuring a safe maintenance health check, access to free posters and factsheets. The European Good Practice Awards offer organisations the opportunity to share examples of good practice in maintenance work and gain recognition for their work in ensuring real improvements in the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees and the public.

For further information, please visit
<http://osha.europa.eu/en/campaigns/hw2010> and
www.hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance



Young Persons Health & Safety in the Workplace Roadshow

Nationally every year thousands of young people have accidents at work and some of them are even fatal. Students from year 10 about to embark on work experience have been getting lessons in health and safety by attending a health and safety roadshow.

The aim of the event is to highlight the dangers a young person may face whilst at work, whilst at the same time ensuring they receive useful advice to get them through their placement safely.

1300 students from Stockport have attended the event across seven dates. During the session the students participated in various activities to spot workplace hazards and learn about occupational diseases. Some of the dangers highlighted include hazards in the construction, office, care, retail, horticulture and catering industries.

The young people were invited to give feedback stating what they did/didn't enjoy and what they had learnt which will be used to inform future events. All those that gave feedback were entered into a prize draw.

Stockport will be sharing the presentations, how the event works and the learning from the evaluation of the roadshow with other authorities so that young people across the rest of Greater Manchester can benefit from similar events.

Business Regulation Solutions

Business Regulation Solutions regularly run open courses across the Greater Manchester, Warrington and Blackburn areas in the following subjects:

- Fire Marshal
- Fire Risk Assessment
- CIEH Food Safety Level 2, 3 & 4
- CIEH Health & Safety Level 2
- Level 2 Food Safety Refresher
- CIEH Level 2 Risk Assessment
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- First Aid at Work
- IOSH courses

We also offer a range of bespoke training and consultancy services providing a regulatory audit for your business, undertaking or facilitating a health & safety/fire risk assessment, provision of Display Energy Certificates and Energy Performance Certificates service.

Business Regulation Solutions was established as a partnership between Manchester Solutions, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, the Greater Manchester Local Authorities and Warrington Council to provide training and consultancy support to businesses to help them with their compliance with a wide range of business regulations. These include fire safety, licensing, trading standards, environmental protection, food safety and health & safety.

To find out more contact a member of the team on
0845 608 3388 or visit our website
www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk

Other useful contacts & websites

Health & Safety Executive
www.hse.gov.uk

Department of Health
www.dh.gov.uk