

Hi-Vis BSA Health and Safety News Items & Notes

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Work related driving- Controlling the risk

In a recent Transport Committee report, Members of Parliament stated that it was “anomalous” that the HSE is not involved in examining work related traffic deaths. The report urges the Government to involve the HSE in these investigations before the end of 2010, as approximately a third of all road deaths occur during a work-related journey.

The good news is that fatalities resulting from road traffic accidents are reducing. This is in some part due to the increased safety features of newer vehicles.

Companies must ensure that they are assessing the risk to employees who use road vehicles for work.

At Bernard Sims Associates (BSA) we are tackling this problem via two pathways:

1. Training

Staff at BSA have recently embarked on the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) “Skills for Life” scheme. This scheme includes an initial 40 minute assessment by an IAM mentor, followed by feedback and more mentoring if required. When ready, an Advanced Driving Test is carried out with a serving police traffic officer.

The benefits of becoming an advanced driver include a greater perception of risk, development of defensive driving skills and lower insurance through some providers.

For more information please check out the website at www.iam.org.uk or contact us.

2. Video Link Up

At BSA, we appreciate the need for representatives from different companies to meet up prior to projects starting. We are also aware that some elements of these meetings could be carried out utilizing new technology.

We have now installed video conferencing systems at our Guildford head office and our Northern Mirfield office with the capability of hosting multi screen conferences that can link up to virtually any broadband connected PC with an ear piece and microphone (Web cam optional).

The system we have installed not only allows video conference, but also allows the sharing of documents, such as word or power point.

If you are interested in video conferencing then we would appreciate your feedback and will gladly pass on our knowledge and experience and will facilitate trials where time and resource permits.

Securing Your Site/Controlling Vehicle & Pedestrian Movements

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continue to drive home the message regarding securing construction sites and ensuring that adequate segregation is made between plant and people.

To highlight this, the HSE recently successfully prosecuted a Lancashire building firm for failing to secure their site from members of the public and segregate vehicles from pedestrians.

The company was fined £6000 and ordered to pay £4534 full costs.

The below picture is not of the firms site that was prosecuted and is unfortunately typical of many sites that we visit. What was essentially a well laid out site was let down by lack of thought regarding access and egress.



Best practice can be achieved by:

- Using gates with wheels and sliding locks instead of chaining fence panels
- Creating a safe pedestrian walkways that leads to the welfare cabins and then onto site
- Planning deliveries
- Enforcing site rules
- Challenging attitudes

A Demolition company was fined £15,000 after an electrician was seriously injured in a fall

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is warning companies to take risk assessments seriously and to ensure that measures identified to control risks are properly implemented, after a demolition company was prosecuted this week over a workplace injury.

A Demolition Contractor, based in Surrey, was fined £15,000 and £4971 costs after pleading guilty to a breach of section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. One of the company directors was also fined £5000 and £1657 costs after pleading guilty to a breach of section 3(1) of the Act.

The prosecution was brought by the HSE following an incident on 11 March, 2005 when an Electrician was seriously injured at a former factory after falling more than five metres. His injuries included a broken pelvis, fracture to his right hip, a shattered hip socket and a broken rib but the consequences could have been far worse.

The HSE inspector stated that the risks of falls from height on this project and the measures needed to control those risks had been identified on more than one occasion, but the Contractor had simply failed to implement the necessary measures. The director had personal knowledge of the circumstances surrounding or leading to this accident and he failed to take obvious steps to prevent it.

The Electrician had entered a tower which was being prepared for demolition, to reclaim some electrical cable for reuse elsewhere on the site. He and a colleague were on the first floor when he stepped on some steel sheet material, which was covering a hole, and it fell away beneath him and he landed on the ground floor 5.5m below.

The HSE investigation found that the Contractor had produced a health and safety plan containing risk assessments that identified appropriate measures, and there was an inspection by the Contractor's Health and Safety Advisor. A Director was declared responsible for health and safety on the site and for carrying out risk assessments for subcontracted work. The Director did not carry out any risk assessments for the electricians, nor did he instruct anyone to carry them out on his behalf. The Contractor did not take effective steps to control risks to subcontracted electricians, or prevent access to the tower once conditions within it had become hazardous. The company did not implement the findings of a previous risk assessment, for work being carried

out by subcontracted electricians, particularly in respect of reclaiming the cable from the tower; or provide them with the appropriate information, instruction and supervision in respect of the changing conditions within the tower.

Fire Detection and Fire Fighting

Regulation 41 of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM) lays down the requirements for fire detection and fire fighting on construction sites.

Regulation 41 (5) indicates that people at work must be trained in the use of fire fighting equipment (so far as reasonably practicable). In this instance, so far as reasonably practicable would mean people whose work is generally on construction sites and people who are likely to be present at various phases of the project.

This becomes critical as the Fire Brigade have amended their fire fighting policy with regards to call out, attendance at call out and measures they are willing to take if life is not directly at risk.

It is critical to tackle fires at an early stage in order to reduce the damage a fire and subsequently fire fighters water can inflict on a project.

Health and Safety Office Myth

Workers are banned from putting up Christmas decorations in the office.

Bah Humbug! Each year we hear of companies banning their workers from putting up Christmas decorations in their offices for 'health and safety' reasons, or requiring the work to be done by a 'qualified' person. Most organisations including HSE and local councils manage to put up their decorations, celebrating the spirit of Christmas without a fuss. They just sensibly provide their staff with suitable step ladders to put up decorations rather than expecting staff to balance on wheelie chairs.

Although please check your Christmas Tree Lights, they have been sat in a box for nearly 11 months and may be faulty!

Bernard Sims Associates – Contacts

For CDM Coordinators, Health & Safety Risk Assessments, Advice, Policies and Plans - Call BSA on 01483 467270 or e-mail us via enquiries@bsims.co.uk

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