

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 2

Stress Awareness Month

PG. 3

Saint Gobain HAVS fail

PG. 4

Manual Handling Tips

PG.5

HSE Rows

PG.6

Roofing Company Fines

HSE eBulletin

PG.7

A Year of Covid

MP CALLS FOR TOUGHER CRANE REGS AFTER BOW COLLAPSE

An MP has called on the government to toughen regulations around tower cranes in the wake of the death of a woman in a crane collapse last year.

Labour's Aspana Begum claimed current rules regarding who can plan and operate tower cranes were "worryingly vague" with no certification system in place. She represents Poplar and Limehouse, the east London constituency in which a crane collapsed in July 2020 (pictured), killing June Harvey, when it crushed her house.

Advice set out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requires operatives to "have received adequate information, instruction and training", and for planners to have "appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience" of lifting equipment, but Begum said the current system is not robust.

She said: "Evidence makes it clear that the regulatory framework needs to be looked at again to ensure the safe usage of safe cranes as part of safe construction of safe buildings. We need robust legislation and robust enforcement."

In the Bow incident last year, neighbouring houses were also badly damaged and around 100 people had to be evacuated to hotels. Some were unable to return home for weeks. Other crane collapses were also brought up during the debate. In particular, Begum highlighted the collapse of a crane in Battersea in 2006, which killed two people, and the length of its investigation. "I am conscious that the investigation into culpability for the aforementioned Battersea crane incident took 10 years to discover that 24 bolts were faulty in the crane that collapsed," she said, calling for investigations by the HSE and Metropolitan Police into the Bow collapse to be swifter.

Following the Battersea collapse, a cranes register was created, which involved users sending HSE information on cranes they were using. The register was scrapped in 2015 because it had not contributed to an increase in safety, Davies said. Begum called for the register to be brought back and also claimed the HSE is underfunded and, as a result, unable to carry out inspections effectively enough.

A subcontractor recently claimed that HSE had refused to investigate allegations of health and safety breaches at a site – two of which involved mobile cranes – because they were not made with photographic evidence and were not from a current employee.



STRESS AWARENESS MONTH —

APRIL 2021

April is Stress Awareness Month, when we raise awareness of the causes and cures for our modern stress pandemic. HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

Everyone experiences stress, it is a normal part of life, but left unchecked it can have serious consequences on our relationships, jobs and overall wellbeing. Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand or threat.

When you feel threatened your body engages the 'fight-or-flight' reaction. This is the body's way of protecting you. However, when you are constantly reacting to small or large stressful situations, without making physical, mental, and emotional adjustments to counter their effect,

you can experience stress that can harm your health and wellbeing. While too much stress can cause minor problems, such as sleep loss, irritability or headaches, it can also contribute to potentially life-threatening illnesses, such as high blood pressure and heart disease.



According to the Mental Health Foundation, three in four UK adults have felt so stressed at some point over the past year they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope. This means millions of us around the UK are experiencing high levels of stress that is damaging our health. But stress is not being taken as seriously as physical health concerns, despite it being a significant factor in mental health problems, including anxiety and depression.

Workplaces and work can be stressful, driven by such factors as working hours, job demands, flexibility, role variety/repetition, shift patterns etc. When you consider stress in the workplace, it might be affecting your own or your employees' health more than you think.

All employers have a legal duty to protect employees from work-related stress by doing a stress risk assessment and acting to tackle or remove any identified risks. So, understanding and recognising the nature and causes of stress can help you effectively manage stress at work.

Bear in mind tertiary interventions, such as helplines, are only a small part of the solution – to truly address stress at work, employers need to focus on primary factors that address the sources of work-related stress.

During stressful times or situations, people often blame themselves for their inability 'to handle it'. Often managers do not understand the normal progression of stress-producing situations and expect employees to immediately return to full productivity after a stressful event. It does not happen. Managers need to understand that adjustment to change is an individual experience and provide support to a wide range of people experiencing diverse feelings. That said, stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another.

Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an employee can cope. Employers need to understand the importance of reducing stress in the workplace; most known stressors are things the employer could improve or remedy. Granted, employers cannot always avoid the tensions that occur on the job, but they can take steps to identify, manage and reduce work-related stressors. Keeping stress in check could create a healthier, and safer, workforce. This April, I challenge you to take a positive step towards reducing stress at work. How? By putting in place a workable approach to identifying and managing stress at work – one place to start is getting managers to build employee 'wellbeing' into their day-to-day and 1-2-1 discussions with their teams and by making your first response the intervention of the manager. Now exhale.

SAINT GOBAIN SUBSIDIARY FAILED TO PROTECT AGAINST VIBRATION RISKS

[Saint-Gobain Construction Products UK has been fined £500,000 for exposing its workers to vibration risks.](#)



The building materials giant was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive after a number of employees were diagnosed with hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).

The three employees used tools such as hand grinders, air chisels, spindle grinders, and earlier on in their employment, jackhammers to finish cast iron drainage products.

One of them had been using vibrating tools at the company's Telford foundry for 27 years.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Magistrates' Court was told that despite the 2016 diagnosis, one of the workers continued working with vibrating tools, without effective measures to control the risk. An HSE investigation found that until 19 December 2017, the vibration risk assessment did not identify each employee's daily exposure to vibration and did not measure cumulative exposures of using different vibrating tools throughout a shift.

Investigators also told the court there was inadequate health surveillance in place and employees were not made aware of HAVS and its symptoms. Despite health surveillance notifying the company of a HAVS diagnosis, the company failed to take effective action to adjust the affected worker's job, meaning staff continued to be exposed to excessive vibration. 'This was an established multinational company that had the resources to protect its workers from the effects of excessive vibration but failed to do so over a long period of time,' said HSE inspector Andrew Johnson.

'All employers have a duty to provide effective measures to ensure the health of their staff is not seriously or permanently harmed by the work they are asked to do.'

The materials division of French glazing giant Saint-Gobain, which had a turnover of £777 million last year, admitted breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. It was fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9453.

INNOVATION

[Resident Progress Update Videos during the Pandemic](#)

The contractor has introduced an exciting and cost-effective way of showcasing progress through video newsletters. In response to coronavirus restrictions preventing the community visiting site in-person, the contractor has diversified communication away from hard-hat visits and resident meetings to digital video newsletters demonstrating progress that is otherwise impossible to observe. This has been a brilliant opportunity to increase the inclusivity of their communication methods as video updates are more easily accessible to people than site visits, and the videos have been well received by local residents.

To create the videos, each month site management film activity, such as craning in façade panels, on their mobile phones. These clips are edited into video newsletters by the contractor's communications team and shared on the community website. These videos demystify the inner workings of the construction programme by exhibiting progress on site, as well as encouraging improvements in the image of the wider industry by realistically showcasing what happens during a complex build programme.

KEY TIPS TO PREVENT MANUAL HANDLING INJURIES AT WORK

Employers must:

- avoid the need for employees to undertake manual handling which involves a risk of them being injured as much as possible
- where avoidance is not practicable, carry out a manual handling risk assessment prior to any manual handling tasks
- provide training and information, including the weight of the load and its heaviest side if its centre of gravity is not centrally positioned, and the equipment and techniques to be used when carrying out a manual handling task
- assess the layout, structure, or nature of the work and the individual capability of staff to reduce manual handling risks
- retain reports on any previous notifiable manual handling incidents and accidents
- give equal consideration to those working away from the employer's premises.

Employees have a responsibility to use the information and resources given to them. There are some simple steps that can be taken before and during moving a load:

- plan the lift and carefully consider whether additional lifting aids are needed. A manual handling risk assessment may also be required at this stage
- reduce the distance of the lift where possible
- map out your route and remove any objects that may cause an obstruction
- wear suitable clothing that would not obstruct the lift
- ensure you have a good grip on the load whether lifting, pushing or pulling
- ensure the person handling the load has completed adequate training
- know your limits and be confident to ask for help if needed.

To safely lift a load:

- place feet hip-width apart with one foot slightly in front of each other
- moderate flexion on the back, hips and knees
- grasp the load firmly
- use the leg muscles to lift the load into a standing position.

Whilst holding the load it is important to remember to:

- keep the back straight, avoid twisting or bending
- carry loads with straight arms
- keep the head up and face straight ahead while handling a load
- keep the load hugged in close to the body while moving.



HSE RESPONDS TO COVID SPOT CHECKERS AND JAB ROWS

A select committee hearing last week on the HSE's COVID-19 response explored the regulator's controversial decision to hire debt collectors as COVID-19 'spot checkers', with the HSE arguing that the £7 million deal enabled it to 'triage' routine cases from serious ones, while the TUC and trade union Prospect declared it had damaged the HSE's reputation.

Cross-party MPs on the select committee, quizzing HSE senior executives and union and employer representatives, also raised concerns that the RIDDOR system had failed to capture the true extent of COVID-19 workplace transmission. The hearing also heard that forthcoming updated HSE guidance on COVID-secure workplaces is likely to side-step the question of employers mandating vaccinations, with HSE chief executive Sarah Albon telling the MPs that it was an 'employment law issue'.

The Department of Work and Pensions Select committee, which was carrying out a non-inquiry evidence session, heard that the combination of HSE inspectors, visiting officers and sub-contracted spot checkers had together carried out more than 60,000 visits to business premises. The HSE also calculated there had been 160,000 interactions with workplaces on COVID guidance, including telephone spot checks and written correspondence; most were proactively raised by the regulator and around 20,000 prompted by concerns.

Explaining the decision to hire Marston Holdings and CDER in October 2020, Sarah said: 'We wanted to devise ways of making sure that we use our trained inspectors in those areas where there was greatest cause for concern, so to effectively build in a triage system that meant that we were able to screen out cases in businesses where the risk was low. 'We wanted to make sure that we used [inspectors'] time surgically where it could be used most effectively to deal with the highest risk.

'The decision to turn to debt collection firms was based on wanting a workforce that could cope with the 'risk of aggression ... who already have training in dealing in difficult situations, in keeping things calm,' she said.

Committee chair Stephen Timms MP asked for feedback on the appointment of two firms from the first two witnesses: Suzannah Nichol, chair of construction trade body Build UK and Verity Davidge, director of central policy at manufacturers' body Make UK.

According to Verity, Make members thought that the scheme 'had value' overall, but some had questioned the 'tick-box' nature of the questions, and other manufacturers had flagged anomalies. These included an HSE spot checker who started to discuss his role as a debt collector, and another who brought the police onto the site. 'Maybe companies felt a little bit threatened, but I would stress those were isolated instances,' she told the MPs.

Suzannah said that construction firms had registered some initial concern at the 'principle' of the move, but in general were pleased to have a visit and 'pass' their assessment.

But Prospect general secretary Mike Clancy said that some HSE warranted inspectors, and Prospect members, feared a dilution of the HSE's reputation and risk of 'dumbing down'. 'The brand of the HSE ... is being carried out not necessarily by the trained, respected inspector but by those who have been brought into this process as an emergency stop-gap. 'Members are deeply committed to the safety and wellbeing mission and they have some serious concerns about the direction of the organisation now.'

TUC deputy general secretary Paul Nowak reported that some employers thought they were being scammed when the spot-checkers came to call. 'HSE contractors have been turned away by employers – either because they do not have a warrant and the employer effectively has denied them access to the workplace, or because the employer suspects that they are not who they say they are because they are not an accredited HSE inspector.'

ROOFING COMPANY FINED AFTER WORKER SUFFERS FATAL INJURIES IN FALL

[A roofing company has been fined after an employee fell through an industrial roof light, sustaining fatal injuries.](#)

Basildon Crown Court heard how on 25 February 2018, Jonathan Moore an employee of R4 Industrial Roofing Cladding Systems Ltd was undertaking repairs on a large warehouse roof in the Port of Tilbury when he stepped on a fragile rooflight, which gave way. He fell more than 10 metres to the concrete floor below sustaining fatal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the repair work was carried out without appropriate safety precautions in place. The planning and supervision of the work was completely inadequate, which also put a self-employed worker assisting with the repairs at risk.

R4 Industrial Roofing Cladding Systems Ltd of Friern Gardens, Wickford, Essex pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They were fined £165,000 and ordered to pay costs of £20,957.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Glyn Davies said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known.

"Companies should be aware that unsafe work at height without suitable and sufficient controls in place is not acceptable and HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standard."

HSE eBulletin

Issued: 25 March 2021

[Please see below for information on setting workplace exposure limits \(WELs\) in Great Britain \(GB\) following the end of the EU Transition Period.](#)



The legal framework in GB continues to ensure that standards of protection for those working with hazardous substances are maintained.

HSE has a robust and well-established regulatory framework in place to protect workers from health risks associated with exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace through the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.

WELs form part of COSHH and are set for specific hazardous substances and must not be exceeded and exposure to asthmagens, carcinogens and mutagens must be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP).

We will continue to review and introduce new WELs and are currently developing our long-term delivery model for GB. This will continue to focus on those substances where we can have most impact in terms of reducing cases of occupational ill-health and will consider, where relevant, limits set outside GB.

Our GB model will continue to include a review of scientific data and evidence and an economic analysis. Independent expert advice will also be sought on any proposals and we will continue to consult with stakeholders on any new or revised limits to be introduced in GB.

Whilst we embed our GB approach, we will continue to consider, then apply as appropriate, those limits set under the EU regime that are of significance to GB.

DO YOU KNOW?

A year of COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world and particularly many people's experience of work – here's how.

Cases worldwide

103m

There have been **103,901,340** confirmed cases of COVID-19



Feeling remote? In the US...

- 73% of remote workers miss casual work banter
- 74% of remote workers find it harder to maintain relationships with their peers
- 68% of remote workers find it harder to maintain relationships with their manager



-10.3% Compared with January 2020 levels, the UK service sector was the hardest hit in November 2020



2.2m

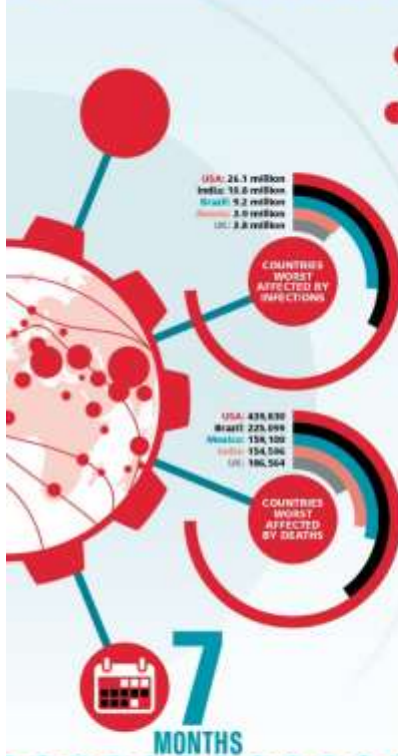
There have been **2,237,636** confirmed deaths from COVID-19 worldwide



5.9x

The number of PPE items distributed for use by health and social care services in England has risen almost six times in some cases.

Item	with 24 August 2020	Average weekly by 2019	Increase
Hand hygiene	332,000	26,200	5.6x
Gloves	16,700,000	3,300,000	5.4x
Shower	94,716,000	16,000,000	5.9x



9.9m

Total number of jobs that have been furloughed in the UK since the start of the job retention scheme (March to December 2020)

TIMELINE

- 17 NOVEMBER 2019** First novel coronavirus case detected in Wuhan, China
- 9 JANUARY 2020** First coronavirus death in Wuhan
- 30 JANUARY 2020** WHO declare the coronavirus outbreak an international public health emergency
- JANUARY** Cases confirmed in US, France, Canada, Australia, Germany, Russia, Italy, UK
- MARCH** UK announce first national lockdown
- APRIL** The International Maritime Organisation halts the world's tanking to worst economic downturn
- JUNE** Imperial College London begins vaccine trial
- AUGUST** WHO reports pandemic is costing the global economy more than \$170n a month
- OCTOBER** UK announces second national lockdown
- NOVEMBER** Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and Oxford/Zeneca all announce positive vaccine test results
- DECEMBER** UK grants the world's first authorisation to the Pfizer vaccine and begins administration; UK identifies new COVID variant

BETWEEN APRIL AND NOVEMBER 2020, UK CONSTRUCTION SAW SEVEN MONTHS OF GROWTH. IN NOVEMBER, IT GREW BY 1.9%



Copyright © 2021 Construction Skills Training Centre. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior written permission of the publisher.

AGA E-LEARNING COURSES

Whether you are looking to improve your own knowledge or provide training to employees, our E-Learning courses will guide you through the regulations, your legal duties, identifying hazards in your workplace and suitable control measures. Each course is followed by a short test to clarify your understanding regarding that topic, upon which after completion, you will be issued a certificate.

Each course costs £15+vat unless otherwise stated. The courses we currently offer training in are:

- Asbestos Awareness *Course cost is £20+vat*
- Abrasive Wheels
- Basic First Aid
- COSHH
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
- Falls Prevention – Working at height
- Fire Safety
- Fire Warden *Course cost is £20+vat*
- Health and Safety Level 2 *Course cost is £20+vat*
- Legionella Awareness
- Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)
- Lone and Remote Workers (Personal Security)
- Manual Handling
- Office Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Slips and Trips
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Overview)



For more information or to book our courses visit www.aga-ltd.co.uk/e-learning-courses.

FREE CDM ADVICE

[Continued Professional Development for all](#)

Do you need help understanding the CDM Regulations 2015? Not sure if you are complying with your duties correctly?

We offer a free CPD consultation to keep you up to date. One of our experienced CDM Consultants will host a virtual session and provide up to the minute, competent advice. We cover everything from Duty Holders to Design Risk Management and welcome any questions or scenarios you need help with.

Please get in touch if this would be of interest to you.

www.aga-ltd.co.uk



Prepared By:

Andrew Goddard Associates Limited
Avon House
82 Wellington Street
Thame
Oxfordshire
OX9 3BN

Tel: 03300 886 585
Email: info@aga-ltd.co.uk
Web: www.aga-ltd.co.uk

