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ON MONDAY 10 JANUARY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES, RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP WARNED DEVELOPERS THAT THEY MUST PAY TO FIX THE CLADDING CRISIS.

He has written to industry giving them a deadline of early March to agree a fully funded plan of action including remediating unsafe cladding on 11-18 metre buildings, currently estimated to be £4 billion.

In the letter Mr Gove makes it clear that if industry fails to take responsibility, the government will, if necessary, impose a solution in law. [Read the letter.](#)

In the letter, the Secretary of State asks companies to agree to:

- make financial contributions to a dedicated fund to cover the full outstanding cost to remediate unsafe cladding on 11-18 metre buildings, currently estimated to be £4 billion
- fund and undertake all necessary remediation of buildings over 11 metres that they have played a role in developing
- provide comprehensive information on all buildings over 11 metres which have historic safety defects and which they have played a part in constructing in the last 30 years

The Secretary of State also gave a statement to the House of Commons announcing plans to protect leaseholders and a package of measures to end the situation of buildings being declared unsafe when they are not.

[More details are available here](#)

YOUNG WORKERS' SAFETY HIGHLIGHTED DURING NATIONAL APPRENTICE WEEK

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK (7- 13 FEBRUARY) IS A TIMELY REMINDER TO MAKE SURE YOUR YOUNG WORKERS ARE RECEIVING THE TRAINING AND SUPERVISION THEY NEED.

Apprentices are more likely to be new to the workplace and could be facing unfamiliar risks.

Remember that workers are as likely to have an accident in the first six months at a workplace as they are during the whole of the rest of their working life.

The HSE have got a wide range of relevant guidance on their [young people at work website](#), including:

- [health and safety for apprentices](#)
- [young people at work – frequently asked questions](#)
- [what the law says about young people at work](#)



DEMOLITION WORK MUST BE PROPERLY PLANNED AND MANAGED – HSE SAY

HSE IS ASKING DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION FIRMS TO DOUBLE-DOWN ON THOROUGH PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF DEMOLITION AND REFURBISHMENT WORK TO AVOID INCIDENTS AND ILL HEALTH AMONGST THEIR WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC.

Great Britain's workplace regulator is asking demolition and construction firms to double-down on thorough planning, management and control of demolition and refurbishment work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is asking that businesses properly plan, organise, manage, and monitor their work and use competent people to avoid incidents and ill health amongst their workers and the public. It is reminding companies that the safer they are, the more efficient they are. Good health and safety management increases the likelihood of contracts coming in on time and within budget with fewer added costs, and often to a higher quality. This follows a series of HSE prosecutions in the past year involving severe injuries and fatalities as a result of poorly planned demolition work.

One such incident involved the joint [HSE AND HAMPSHIRE POLICE INVESTIGATION](#) into the tragic death of a 64 year



old worker killed when a domestic garage wall collapsed on him, after a contractor operating a digger failed to put an exclusion zone in place whilst carrying out demolition work. This resulted in a lengthy prison sentence for the builder. HSE is reminding contractors that it is crucial to complete a survey ahead of demolition work including structural investigation and appraisal, which considers the age of the structure, type of construction, history of the building including alterations and design codes used to avoid an uncontrolled collapse. Specific consideration should also be given to the effect of additional weight of demolition machinery and debris on suspended floors; and the risks to nearby buildings and structures.

HSE's head of construction Sarah Jardine said: "Structural instability can be a problem in buildings that are old, decayed, poorly maintained, and in newer buildings that have been badly designed and constructed or abused in use. "Even sound structures can become unstable because of a lack of planning of construction and demolition work."

She added: "It is easy to get it wrong even on small, straightforward structures, which makes it even more important to put the planning in place when it comes to demolishing large, complex structures. Demolishing these types of structures is a particularly hazardous activity and doing it safely is highly complicated and technical, so relevant expertise is vital. These jobs require careful planning and execution by contractors who are competent in the full range of demolition techniques and have access to designers and engineers with the right knowledge, skills, and experience in this area."

A systematic approach to demolition projects should be a team effort. Clients must appoint professionals who have the relevant skills, knowledge, experience, organisational capability, and who are adequately resourced.

Clients, with the help of the principal designer must provide essential pre-construction information to the relevant designers and engineers. This should include a range of surveys and reports to check for presence of asbestos, structural stability, and the location of above and below ground live services.

It is the principal designer's responsibility to plan, manage, monitor, and coordinate health and safety issues in the pre-construction phase to ensure principal contractors are provided with relevant information to enable them to put safety measures in place. Once the demolition work has begun it is the principal contractor's responsibility to plan, manage and monitor the demolition activities and coordinate work to ensure that it is carried out without risks to health and safety. While site managers must ensure workers are supervised and are following safe working practice.

The HSE website has specific health and safety guidance on the [key issues involved with demolition work](#).

SIX YEARS SINCE DIDCOT DISASTER

THIS FEBRUARY MARKS THE SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIDCOT DISASTER IN WHICH FOUR DEMOLITION WORKERS WERE KILLED.

The disused coal-fired plant was set to be demolished when its boiler house collapsed on 23 February 2016. Authorities continue to investigate possible manslaughter and health and safety offences after four men died.

This update, provided by Thames Valley Police media officer Gareth Ford-Lloyd reads as follows:

Thames Valley Police continues to lead a joint investigation between ourselves and the Health and Safety Executive after four men died following the partial collapse at Didcot Power Station on 23 February 2016, which was launched immediately following the incident.

We continue to investigate corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter and Health and Safety offences. We also maintain close contact with the Crown Prosecution Service, providing them with regular updates on the investigation.

We retain regular proactive contact with the families through our dedicated Family Liaison Officers who are there for the families if they wish to ask anything about the investigation. In addition to this the SIO and his management team provide

regular updates to the family in person or online. Updates have been provided by the investigation team on an agreed periodic basis, or where there is a significant update to provide. We also maintain regular contact with the Crown Prosecution Service with updates on the investigation.



At this time it is not possible for us to put a specific timeframe for the investigation to be completed. The dedicated investigation team will continue their work to ensure a thorough investigation is completed in the interests of justice and to deliver answers for the family.

PREVENTING WORK-RELATED STRESS

IN GREAT BRITAIN 822,000 WORKERS SUFFERED FROM WORK-RELATED STRESS, DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY IN 2020/21.

Whether people are lone workers, shift workers, home workers, or surrounded by colleagues, it is important that they feel connected and know where to go when they need support.

The HSE's [Talking Toolkits](#) can help to start conversations to identify causes of stress for your workers and identify possible solutions.

Visit HSE's website for more guidance on [managing work-related stress](#).

Their [Working Minds campaign](#) raises awareness about how to recognise and respond to the signs of stress to protect workers and support good mental health to help people stay well.

Read the latest Working Minds blog '[Handle change, avoid stress](#)' from Kate Nowicki, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Change at Acas.

Businesses and organisations can support this campaign by becoming [Working Minds Champions](#).



BSR'S PROPOSED OVERSIGHT OF THE BUILDING CONTROL PROFESSION

UNDER THE BUILDING SAFETY BILL CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH PARLIAMENT, THE BUILDING SAFETY REGULATOR WILL INDEPENDENTLY OVERSEE THE BUILDING CONTROL PROFESSION THROUGH A ROBUST REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.

HSE has published an outline of their proposals for oversight on our [building safety webpages](#).

This new building control oversight strategic framework will apply to local authority building control teams and private sector registered building control approvers (RBCAs). The strategic framework aims to cover the performance of the building control sector and the competence of the professionals supporting the delivery of building control functions.

If the relevant sections of the Building Safety Bill remain unchanged, the Building Safety Regulator will consult on the building control oversight framework. This will include operational standards rules (OSRs) and associated key

performance indicators, together with a code of conduct and competence framework for registered building inspectors and professional conduct rules for RBCAs.

If this applies to your work in the building control profession you will need to consider what these proposals will mean for you and what actions you may need to take to prepare.



BACK TO BASICS: CHEMICAL HAZARDS



IN THE LATEST ARTICLE OF OUR SERIES EXPLORING CORE OSH TOPICS, WE FOCUS ON UNDERSTANDING CHEMICAL HAZARDS.

1. UNDERSTAND THE DANGER

Chemicals have played a vital role in creating the modern world. But if hazardous chemicals are not effectively and safely managed, they can cause harm to workers, the public, nature, and the wider environment.

Before undertaking a hazardous substance assessment and implementing control measures, you must first identify the potential hazards that substances pose. There are several ways that OSH professionals can identify hazards from chemicals in the workplace, such as:

- Reading a Safety Data Sheet for a manufactured chemical
- Undertaking occupational hygiene monitoring (air sampling and/or biological monitoring)
- Identifying hazardous chemicals that are process-generated, naturally occurring or created by production processing by seeking advice from process engineers or industrial chemists and by referring to guidance material
- Identifying how exposure occurs: What are the properties of the substance? How are they used? How much? How long?
- Identifying who is at risk. Particular groups will be at higher risk of working with some chemicals. For example, new and expectant mothers are at risk if the chemical is a mutagen or teratogen, while asthmatics are vulnerable if the chemical is a sensitiser or irritant.

2. KNOW YOUR CLASSIFICATIONS

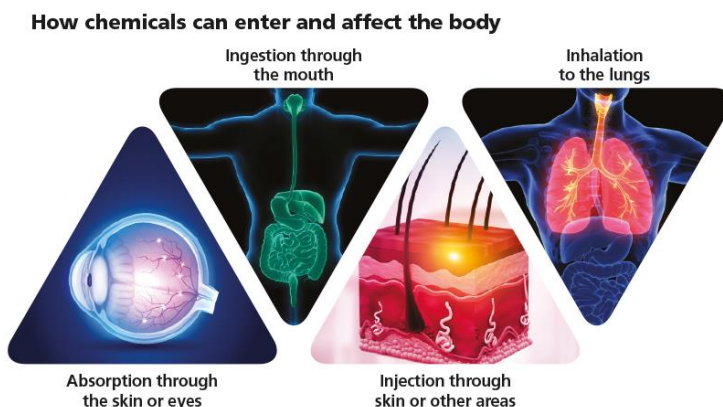
The second step in making sure your management of these substances is correct is to understand the types of substances, their classifications, and the related symbols.

- **Corrosive:** e.g., oven cleaners and caustic soda
- **Dangerous to the environment:** e.g., chlorofluorocarbons and pesticides
- **Explosive:** e.g., fireworks
- **Toxic:** e.g., lead
- **Harmful or irritant:** e.g., isocyanates found in some paints or adhesives
- **Sensitiser:** substances that can cause an allergic reaction or effect, usually affecting the skin or respiratory system, e.g., isocyanate paints
- **Oxidising:** e.g., hair dyes and bleaches
- **Highly or extremely flammable:** e.g., liquefied petroleum gas and methylated spirits
- **Carcinogenic, mutagens and reprotoxins, teratogens:** e.g., silica dust and diesel fumes.

3. CHEMICALS AND THE BODY

It is also important to understand how people can be affected by hazardous substances. There are a number of ways that chemicals can enter and affect the body.

- Injection through skin or other areas
- Inhalation to the lungs
- Absorption through the skin or eyes
- Ingestion through the mouth.



4. DEALING WITH THE RISK

The potential risk posed by hazardous subjects can be controlled, reduced, or even eliminated altogether in several ways.

Elimination

- Change the activity so that a hazardous chemical is not used
- Use a non-harmful substance instead of a hazardous one (known as elimination through substitution).

Substitution

- Change the type of hazardous chemicals used in the process with a less harmful substitute
- Change the form of the substance used – in other words, use a pelletised form of the hazardous chemical, rather than a powdered form
- Use a brush or roller to apply paint instead of a spray gun
- Replace asbestos with safer synthetic substitutes, such as glass foam, rock and glass wool
- Vacuum or use an industrial sweeper to clean up concentrated dusts, rather than sweep them up manually
- Select a product with less volatile ingredients
- Reduce the quantities of hazardous chemicals used in the process, if at all possible.

Engineering controls

- Enclose the system
- Use local exhaust ventilation to remove fumes
- Use ventilation as the main method of control for airborne chemical hazards, particularly contaminants in underground mines and sample preparation areas when pulverising samples
- Use spill containment
- Use safety relief valves
- Use overfill protection
- Introduce a restricted work area
- Locate potentially hazardous materials or processes away from frequently used thoroughfares and buildings
- Separate goods from other hazards
- Segregate incompatible substances.

Administrative controls

- Modify the system of work, such as changing the times when certain tasks are done
- Use placards or hazard warning signs
- Use housekeeping and labelling to limit inadvertent exposure (especially skin) to workplace hazards
- Provide situation-specific training and work instructions
- Rotate staff to minimise exposure times to hazardous chemicals
- Implement emergency arrangements to mitigate accidental release of chemicals or inadvertent exposure of workers to chemicals
- Provide safety showers as part of emergency arrangements, such as exposure to corrosives
- Provide spill clean-up equipment
- Use schedules to remove workers from exposure, such as removing lead miners from the area of exposure if their blood lead levels exceed a certain level
- Use occupational hygiene monitoring and health surveillance to keep an eye on exposure levels.

PPE/RPE

Provide appropriate eye, respiratory and hand protection for workers, as well as instructions on when and how to use it.



DOES THE NEW HYBRID WORK PATTERN INTRODUCE NEW RISKS?

HOW TO REDUCE THE SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH HYBRID WORKING WAS THE TOPIC DEBATED BY AN EXPERT PANEL IN A WEBINAR HOSTED BY IOSH MAGAZINE



Louis Wustemann, former editor of *IOSH magazine*, kicked off proceedings asking why employers needed to prepare specially for part-time home working as part of hybrid schemes when their employees had already spent two years on and off working from home.

‘The key difference is that we are looking at making this sustainable now,’ answered Matt Birtles, principal ergonomist at Great Britain’s safety watchdog, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

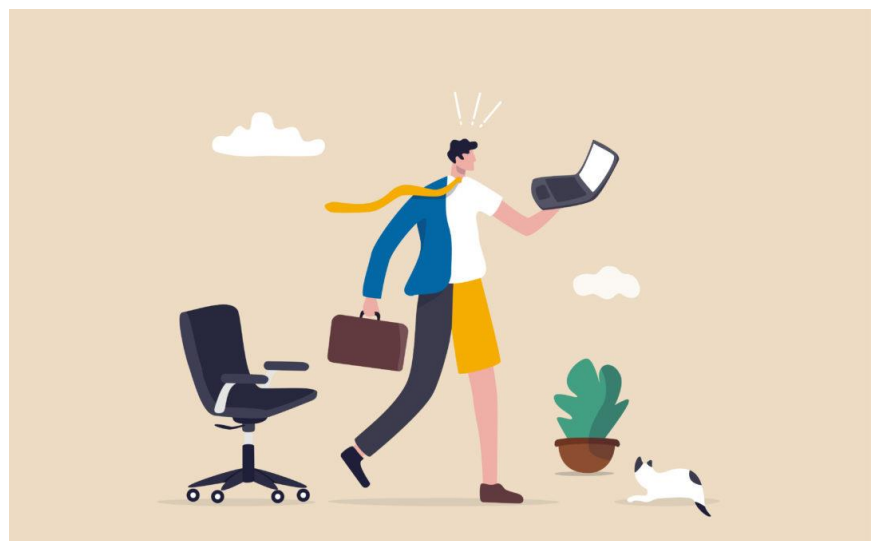
‘Initially, when we were all sent home a couple of years ago, the HSE wasn’t asking duty

holders to do risk assessments, for fear of people sending DSE assessors to people’s houses,’ Matt continued. People were working at dining tables and in little homemade office spaces in corners of bedrooms and so on. We know that had to happen, so we didn’t ask people for specific assessments. What’s changed since December is we are now asking people to risk manage home working, albeit hybrid home working, as they would for the office environment. ‘So, the key change is doing a risk assessment of the DSE workstation, providing the equipment that people need to have a sustainable and healthy posture while working at home.’

Judith McNulty Green, safety and health application manager at IOSH, added that the difference lay in ‘the opportunity to learn the lessons – and we all made mistakes when we went to work from home in that emergency situation. Now we have the opportunity to reflect on what went well from that and what we could learn from and do better,’ she added. Louis cited the [findings of a survey commissioned by EcoOnline](#), which found that 74% of organisations had dealt with employees who suffered from isolation during pandemic home working and 49% had staff who had reported musculoskeletal problems.

A risk assessment of hybrid workers’ home work space should be reasonable, said Matt, ‘As long as it’s proportionate and an employee’s health is not affected, we have a bit of leeway in home assessments to manage people and what we provide.’ He said an adjustable chair, a desk and a screen that can be set at the user’s eye level were all reasonable things to check in home workspace, using the standard checklist used for office DSE assessments, but the desk might be a dining table in a smaller home.

‘Rendering a laptop screen at eye level could mean spending a few hundred



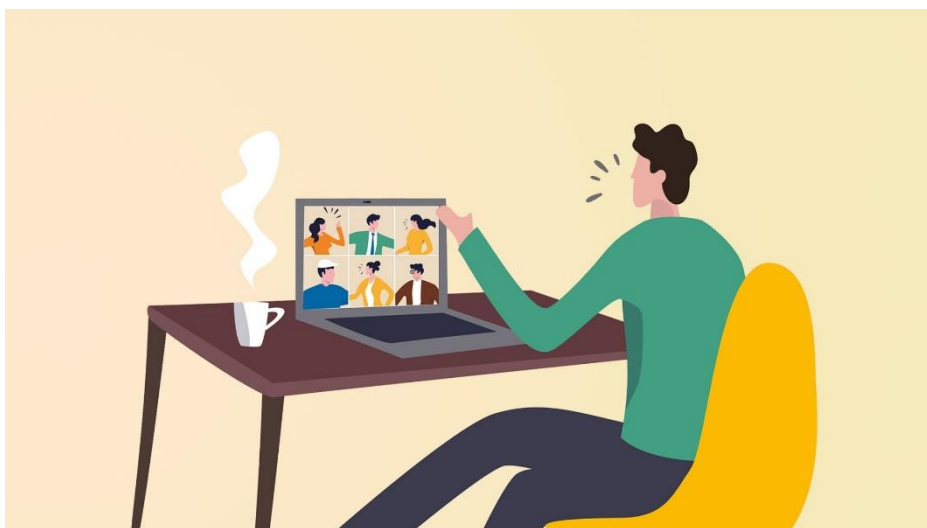
pounds on a monitor or it could mean a laptop stand and separate keyboard for tens of pounds. The outcomes are the same,' he said.

Louis noted that the EcoOnline survey showed that a monitor or laptop stand was the most common piece of equipment provided by employers for hybrid workers, followed by adjustable chairs.

Matt said that the proportion of time spent at home also helped dictate how closely the employers should look into the DSE set-up. 'Where we've got less exposure, it will have less of an effect on our bodies, and we can compromise a bit more.'

Jade Walton, product manager at EcoOnline, raised the issue of establishing work patterns through discussion between the employee and employer, 'So you can reach that level of understanding of what level of assessment needs to take place and where the dominant set-up is, in the home or in the office.'

Self-assessment questionnaires completed by the individual employees and checked by a line manager or safety and health practitioner was an adequate form of risk assessment, Matt confirmed. He advised risk managers to concentrate on the DSE set up in an employee's home 'but don't look too much further afield it will quickly become too much to manage.'



Judith said that one way to look at risk assessment was to identify the hazards that the employer is introducing into the home by expecting people to work there. 'It's important to look at the psychosocial hazards and the right to disconnect from work,' she said. 'We can all imagine circumstances where that work computer is on in the corner, and you can hear it pinging away. It's that draw to be available for your employer versus needing that time to rest and recuperate at the end of the day.'

Asked what they expected to be the biggest psychosocial risks associated with home working, the panel agreed stress was the one to watch out for.

'Isolation is another big one,' said Jade. 'Feeling disconnected from the people you work with. When we are in an office it is very easy to pop into another section or go to the kitchen and make a cup of tea and chat to people. It's very easy to feel isolated at home if you don't have any touch points with people as you would in an office.'

Judith said her experience of managing a team that included hybrid workers had made her aware of the pressure some people feel to be 'always available' and that the new pattern also presented challenges in supporting less experienced or junior staff who might have sought help through informal conversations.

Louis suggested that to reduce the risk of isolation employers should be doing as much as possible to double up communications channels to make sure everyone is kept in contact with developments in their team and the wider organisation during their days working remotely, as well as when they are in the office. Everybody that started working from home in the lockdowns fell into communicating via applications like Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Skype very quickly and quite easily,' said Jade.

'If we look at the kind of technology that can support communication from a health, safety and wellbeing perspective, it's more how technology can act as a prompt to get in contact with a certain person and to ask how they are, how they find working from home, what their workload is like.'

Judith said training for hybrid workers and their managers should clarify exactly what the organisation expects of people and, for line managers particularly, their responsibilities for checking in remotely, as Jade had suggested. It is critical that the organisation sets out its stall about how it wants these things to be dealt with and that is evidenced in the training provided,' she said.

NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



We would like to announce that Harri has been promoted to Associate Director.

Congratulations Harri!

Harri will be leading the Design side of the business. Focusing on the Principal Designer role, Design Risk Registers and Pre-Construction Information.

Harri joined Andrew Goddard Associates in February 2021. Her day-to-day role includes preparing Pre-Construction Information, liaising with the design team during the design risk management stage, compiling Health and Safety Files, and liaising with Clients, Principal Contractors and Architects to ensure every project is fully compliant with the CDM Regulations 2015. In 2009 Angharad passed the NEBOSH Construction Certificate. In 2015 she achieved her NEBOSH Level 6 Diploma. In 2018 she achieved her NEBOSH Fire Safety Certificate.

When not in work, Angharad loves spending time with her family going on adventures and long walks. She is a massive rugby fan and used to play for Wales under 18's.

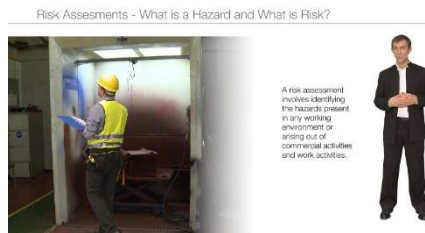
Best of luck Harri we look forward to a bright future with you.

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 £25+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)



Basic Ladder Awareness - Directive Key Requirements.

Classification	Duty Limit	Maximum Static Vertical Load	Application	Symbol
Class I	130kg	175kg	Industrial	
Class EN131	115kg	150kg	Commercial	
Class III	95kg	125kg	Domestic	

The value of the static working load is intended to cover the weight of a single person and their equipment and is also referred to as the 'Maximum Static Vertical Load'.



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



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