

HSE urges employers to think again before investing in off-the-shelf manual handling training

Off-the-shelf manual handling training should become a thing of the past, according to [new advice](#) released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

New musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) advice has been issued by HSE to help employers to decide what type of help they need to tackle the MSD risks in their workplace. The web-based advice illustrates different approaches with examples and identifies who may be able to help address their needs.

The [web based advice](#) has been developed with the input and involvement of businesses, trade unions, trade bodies, training providers, professional bodies and safety professionals and consultants.

Launching the web-based advice at its inaugural MSD Summit on Wednesday, HSE's Health and Work Portfolio Manager Geoff Cox said: "Our research shows that simplistic training involving bending your knees to lift a cardboard box is just a waste of time and money, it just doesn't make any difference." "The overall aim is to avoid and reduce manual handling, and that's where employers should start if their workforce faces manual handling risks. Don't start with training, start with re-organising and redesigning your working practices." "If you do need staff training, and there are many residual risks where this is the case, then this needs to be customised and professionally delivered. Any such training should be based on observations of current working practices, and should be informed by the views and experience of the workforce."

Organisations involved in developing the web guide included EEF, Unite the Union, ROSPA, IOSH and BSIF among many others. Terry Woolmer, Head of Health and Safety Policy at EEF said: "The new web-based advice won't tell you how to resolve your MSD issues but it will help you decide what types of approaches suit your business and where to get the help you need."

National Health and Safety Advisor for Unite the Union, Susan Murray said "The key point from the web-based advice is the importance of involving workers in all aspects dealing with manual handling solutions – the people who do the work often come up with the best answers."

Health and Safety Consultant at RoSPA, Roy McKee said: "The web-based advice recognises training has a place in the hierarchy of controls for manual handling and also its limitations. It allows the risk profile of the company to dictate the level of competence and extent of help necessary rather than a person's accreditation or qualifications. Where previously, SME's might not know where to go for assistance in ergonomic interventions or workplace designs, hopefully the web guide will change this."

Commercial Director at Pristine Condition, Phil Bladon said: *“The web-based advice should make employers think about what sort of help they need. Where a training need is identified, it’s now broadly accepted that conventional approaches aren’t particularly effective. Instead, the training must be practically-orientated, relevant and engaging for the individual, making it more likely that it’s adopted at the “coal face”, and critically, be part of a far more comprehensive system for changing manual handling behaviour in the long-term..”*

Chief Executive Officer of the BSIF, Alan Murray: “It’s simple and straightforward – the web-based advice should set businesses in the right direction.” The full web-based advice can be viewed at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/external-help.htm>.

Ends

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. Stakeholders involved in developing the web-based advice were: EEF manufacturers’ organisation, National Access & Scaffolding Confederation, Unite the Union, Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents, Pristine Condition, National Safety Industry Federation (BSIF), Institute for Occupational Safety & Health, Occupational Safety & Health Consultants Register, Chartered Institute for Ergonomics and Human Factors and National Back Exchange; Parcel Carriers Safety Association; Chartered Institute for Environmental Health; Thameside Borough Council; Manchester City Council; Royal Free London NHS Trust; British Retail Consortium; Edge Training; Britton Price; Glass & Glazing Federation; British Red Cross; British Safety Council
4. HSE Research Report 583 – Manual Handling Training: Investigation of current practices and development of guidelines: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr583.htm>

[Company and director fined for exposing workers to fall from height risks](#)

A solar panel installation company and its sole director have been fined for

failing to manage and control fall from height risks.

Reading Crown Court heard how, after a concern was raised by a member of public, a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector made a visit to the site where Sasie Limited was installing solar panels on the roof of a commercial building. On this visit the inspector identified two workers on the roof without any form of fall protection and a prohibition notice was served.

When the HSE inspector returned to the site three days later there was further unsafe work being carried out on the roof. An investigation by HSE found that the unsafe work was allowed to continue by the director, Mr Kelly despite a member of public bringing it to his attention and the serving of the prohibition notice.

Sasie Limited of Waterway Street, Nottingham pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and Sections 33(1)(g) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and also Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,300.

Mr Een Marsden Kelly of Waterway Street, Nottingham pleaded guilty to breaching two counts of Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £500.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Dominic Goacher said “Falls from heights are the one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries.

“All work at height must be properly planned irrespective of the task being undertaken and those in control must ensure suitable control measures to prevent falls are in place throughout the duration of the project”.

Notes to Editors:

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information about best practices can be found in freely available HSE guidance <http://hse.gov.uk/construction/safetyopics/roofwork.htm>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

Help GB Work Well case study highlights ISTR's new research for working with arthropods

As we near the end of British Science Week, we're sharing how the Institute of Safety in Technology and Research's (ISTR) commitment to managing risk and keeping pace with change as part of their contribution to Help GB Work Well, has led to the delivery of internationally-significant research.

A collaborative project between research scientists and the Institute has produced the first industry guidance on working safely with a variety of insect vectors of disease as well as genetically modified (GM) insects.

Following the rise in emerging and re-emerging infections including Zika, Bluetongue and West Nile, there has been a surge in research into the causes and carriers of these diseases. Due to the impact on public health, the economy and animal health and welfare, understanding these diseases has become both a national and international priority.

The need for a common approach to the management, design and operation of UK research facilities was identified by the |Institutes members who raised the issue with the Biosafety Steering Group (BSG). Previous guidance focussed on the requirements of biosafety legislation regarding work with infected animals, but there was no comprehensive or specific guidance available for working safely with infected arthropods.

Given the specialist nature of the work, and following discussions with HSE, it was agreed that the need could be addressed by preparing guidance to supplement and complement the official guidance available and to provide practical guidance for the community.

The project involved a range of different research organisations, biosafety specialists and research scientists from the public and private sectors.

The new guidance includes a range of good practice approaches to containment and control and is based on the real-life experience of those working in these facilities and formalises this in a way so that others can learn and benefit from them.

Acknowledging that there is more than one way to achieve safe working is a key message and means that the guidance can meet the needs of a broad range of users while ensuring work is managed safely and facilitating the delivery of research of national and international importance. The aim of the Institute is to enhance the knowledge, competence and professional development of its members. The Institutes Biosafety Steering Group represents the interests of UK biosafety nationally and internationally.

Making a commitment to Helping Great Britain Work Well demonstrates the willingness of the Institute's members to share their personal knowledge, skills and experience both among the membership and with academic and scientific colleagues.

Farming company fined after worker falls from ladder

A farming company has been fined after a worker fell from a ladder sustaining significant injuries.

Greater Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, on 28 January 2016, an employee of Edge Farming Company was cleaning the gutters on a farm building when the ladder he was working on slipped down the face of the building. The employee suffered a broken arm, shoulder and fractured elbow as a result.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found there was inadequate control measures in place with regards to working at height. There was no specific risk assessment for the cleaning of gutters even though it was a regular occurrence on the farm and the company failed to ensure that there was appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision. The defendant had also failed to report the accident within the required timeframe.

Edge Farming Company of Wimboldsley Hall, Wimboldsley, Cheshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 4 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) and has been fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,826.74 .

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Rose Leese-Weller said: "This incident could have been fatal. Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of work and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers. For example, the work in this case could easily have been carried out using a mobile elevated work platform or a properly designed and erected mobile scaffold tower.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. More information about working at height can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

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[West Midlands man handed suspended sentence for unregistered gas work](#)

An unregistered gas fitter was handed a 26-month suspended sentence for carrying out gas work after his Gas Safe Registration had been removed and he had been prohibited from carrying out further work on gas appliances and fittings.

Coventry Magistrates' Court heard that 71-year-old Harcharan Singh Sembi continued to carry out unsafe work on gas appliances despite having been removed from the Gas Safe Register and prohibited from doing further gas work by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

An investigation by the HSE found that Mr Sembi was removed from the Gas Safe Register for failing to meet competency standards. Despite this, he continued to carry out unsafe work on gas appliances despite it being an offence to work without Gas Safe Registration and in contravention of an enforcement notice.

Mr Harcharan Singh Sembi of William Groubb Close, Coventry, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) 1998 Regulations and was sentenced to 12 months in custody, suspended for two years. Mr Sembi also pleaded guilty to breaching Section 33 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was sentenced to 14 months in custody, suspended for two years. He was also ordered to undertake 40 hours of unpaid work.

In his sentencing remarks, HHJ Potter commented that Mr Sembi's offences were so serious that he would have imposed an immediate custodial sentence if his personal circumstances had been different. The defendant's age and the circumstances around the support available to his elderly wife were factors taken into consideration by the Judge in concluding that a suspended sentence was proportionate.

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Karl Raw commented: "Harcharan Sembi undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do.

"All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life."

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