M&S on board for the latest HSE podcast on asbestos

Britain's workplace regulator has just launched a new podcast outlining the duty to manage asbestos in buildings.

In this episode, experts from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) discuss the legal obligation to manage asbestos in buildings, highlight where it is likely to be found and explain why it is dangerous.

Former BBC radio journalist Mick Ord hosts HSE principal inspector Tim Beaumont and Samantha Lord, a principal specialist inspector, as they discuss the risks posed by asbestos. They are joined by Craig Barker, who works as a property and asbestos manager for British retailer Marks and Spencer (M&S).

Back in January, HSE launched the Asbestos – Your Duty campaign, featuring updated web guidance, including new templates and explanatory videos.

The podcast discusses the importance of the campaign, including a talk through the risk to health of asbestos exposure and the steps involved in the legal duty to manage it in non-domestic buildings.

In his 11 years at M&S, Craig and his health and safety team have established robust ways of working to manage asbestos containing materials. He discusses how they have developed training for employees and put controls in place to ensure that the duty to manage asbestos is upheld, and the processes are followed when any work is carried out on its buildings.

Notes to Editors:

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2. More information about the legislation referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest HSE news releases is available.

Mental Health Awareness Week: New HSE

campaign partners in construction and entertainment

To mark mental health awareness week, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) welcomes new partners from the construction and entertainment sectors to join its Working Minds campaign.

Running a business in construction can be stressful with long hours and juggling intense workloads.

Meanwhile, the entertainment and leisure sector is a fast-paced and ever-changing industry, with many people self-employed, freelancing, or on short-term contracts. This can lead to uncertainty and unsociable hours.

Around half of all reported work-related ill health in Great Britain is due to stress, depression or anxiety . Whilst the causes can be due to difficult life events, they can also be caused by work-related issues or a combination of both.

In support of the Working Minds campaign, two new partners join the campaign to help promote support available to the construction and entertainment technology industries; The Scaffolding Association and Professional Lighting and Sound Association (Plasa). This takes the number of partners to a total of 35. They will be provided with the tools needed to promote good mental health in the workplace.

Mental health awareness week (13 – 19 May) is a pertinent time to remind employers and managers of the support that is available to help them to prevent work related stress, support good mental health in the workplace and meet their legal obligations to protect workers. Whether work is causing the health issue or aggravating it, employers have a legal responsibility to help their employees.

Elizabeth Goodwill, HSE Work related stress and mental health policy, said: “We spend a lot of time at work, and it can have both positive and negative effects on our mental health.

“We all have periods of good and poor health, both physically and mentally. It’s normal for people to have challenging times and, like any other work-related risk to health, risks to mental health should be included in risk assessments at work.

“Having regular conversations about work related stress and mental health helps to reduce stigma and encourages people to talk about their problems earlier. The earlier an issue is recognised, the sooner action can be taken to reduce or remove it.”

Find out more about the practical resources and support available from HSE’s Working Minds campaign including free online learning where employers can access step by step guidance in one place.

Construction

Running a business in construction can be stressful with long hours, juggling intense workloads. According to Mates in Mind, workplace stress is being felt like never before within small, micro and sole trader businesses.

The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity report that the highest number of calls to their helpline were from labourers.

Robert Candy, Scaffolding Association CEO, said: “Celebrating our commitment to mental health and workplace safety, we are proud to support the Health and Safety Executive Working Minds campaign. Working in the scaffolding sector can be challenging with a wide range of pressures that include finding skilled workers, maintaining a pipeline of work, and managing cash flow.

Robert adds: “At the Scaffolding Association, we firmly believe in fostering a culture of well-being and proactive support in the workplace. Through our partnership with the Working Minds campaign, we are reaffirming our dedication to promoting mental health awareness and providing support to our members in the scaffolding sector. Our members are undertaking some inspiring and innovative initiatives in this vital area, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to prioritise mental health.

Help is available

If you or someone you know needs help or support, reach out and ask how they are feeling and coping.

Working Minds Construction – Work Right to keep Britain safe

Every Mind Matters (NHS) offers a free personalised Mind Plan for tips and advice to help you look after your mental health. Just answer 5 questions online.

Mates in Mind charity can provide can also offer advice to organisations through their Supporter Programme or

- individuals can text “BeAMate” to 85258 to access free and confidential mental health support service from trained volunteers.
- download managing and reducing workplace stress handbook.
- Read the blog How are you really? by former MD, Sarah Meek.

The Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity provides free support services to any construction worker or their family including;

- 24/7 Construction Industry Helpline, call 0345 605 1956
- Text HARDHAT to 85258 f you’re uncomfortable talking and would rather text
- Free Construction Industry Helpline mobile app.

Every Mind Matters (NHS) offers a free personalised Mind Plan for tips and

advice to help you look after your mental health. Just answer 5 questions online.

Entertainment

The entertainment and leisure sector is a fast-paced and ever-changing industry, with many people self-employed, freelancing, or on short-term contracts. This can lead to uncertainty and long, unsociable hours.

Nicky Greet, Director PLASA Membership, Skills and Technical said: “PLASA fully supports the HSE Working minds campaign and is proud to be a campaign partner. For any business, people are the most important asset.”

Help is available

Entertainment and leisure – Work Right to keep Britain safe

Every Mind Matters (NHS) offers a free personalised Mind Plan for tips and advice to help you look after your mental health. Just answer 5 questions online.

Mental health resources for the entertainment and leisure sector include:

- Film & TV Charity: Confidential and free support for anyone working behind the scenes in film, TV, or cinema. Support Line 0800 054 0000.
- The Mark Milsome Foundation – Film and TV Online Safety Passport Course (90 minutes)
- Association of Event Venues – Heads up: your well-being tool kit
- Read the Blog from Mig Burgess, teacher, Creative Designer, and Production Technician on her summer commitment to learn more about work-related stress. Mig’s also produced a guidance note for The Association of British Theatre Technicians.

Waste management company fined after worker suffers burns to body and face

A worker suffered burns to his face and body after the crowbar he was using came into contact with a live electrical conductor.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuted a waste management company following the incident on 14 July 2021.

The man was moving heavy duty electrical cables with a metal crowbar on a mobile elevating working platform when the bar came into contact with the live conductor, causing an electrical explosion at Copper Hill industrial

estate, Ermine Street, Barkston Heath, Lincolnshire.

As well as suffering serious burns, the explosion caused the man to fall from the platform and sustain a broken left arm, fractured ribs and dislocated knee cap.

The worker had been contracted by New Earth Solutions (West) Limited, trading as Mid UK Recycling, to work at the firm's recycling plant at Copper Hill industrial estate.

An investigation by HSE into the incident found this task was not part of the normal workload for the injured worker and that he had not received any training with regards to undertaking electrical work. The task had not been properly planned nor risk assessed and the electrical cables were not isolated before work began. In addition, the level of supervision provided was inadequate and safety devices on the electrical supply had been set inappropriately, prioritising continuity of supply over safety of the electrical circuit.

HSE guidance can be found at: Electrical safety – HSE.

New Earth Solutions (West) Limited, of Station Road, Caythorpe, Grantham, Lincolnshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £200,000 and ordered to pay £12,466.60 in costs at Lincoln Magistrates' Court on 10 May 2024.

HSE inspector Tim Nicholson said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by properly planning the task, ensuring that all workers involved were suitably competent and making sure that electrical conductors were isolated before the work began.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate

enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Jayne Wilson and supported by HSE paralegal officer Ellen Garbutt.

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

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Companies fined as worker injured at Pirelli factory

Three companies have been fined after a lift truck engineer was seriously injured while working at Pirelli Tyres' factory in Carlisle.

Ivan Weightman sustained fractures to his back and leg when two heavy metal skips fell on top of him, trapping the 47-year-old against the ground on 14 November 2019.

Pirelli, International Rubber and Tyre Recycling Limited and DCS Multiserve Limited were all prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following the incident on Dalston Road. Workers from International Rubber and Tyre Recycling Limited moved materials at the site whereas staff from DCS Multiserve Limited removed waste.

Mr Weightman was servicing a fork lift truck that was parked up against a stack of waste tyres on a stillage. Two metal skips were positioned on top of the stack.

Pirelli’s site on Dalston Road, Carlisle.

In order to work on the truck, Mr Weightman moved the vehicle a short distance away from the stack.

As he then walked to the front of the truck, which was leased by International Rubber and Tyre Recycling Limited, both skips fell from the stack and trapped him against the floor.

He fractured four lumbar vertebrae, his left femur and was hospitalised for several weeks as a result of the incident.

Pirelli’s site on Dalston Road, Carlisle.

A HSE investigation found the skips were routinely placed on the tyres so they will be reduced in size prior to them being transported off site. The truck was positioned to stabilise the skips. This improvised working method was approved by Pirelli, and carried out by workers at International Rubber and Tyre Recycling Limited and DCS Multiserve Limited . There had been no effective control over access to the truck and the ignition key was routinely left in the cab. There was a lack of clarity over which contractor was responsible for this activity and as a result no risk assessment had been made and no safe system of work existed.

Mr Weightman said in his victim personal statement: “I used to enjoy going camping, going for walks with my partner and doing a bit of DIY. I had to get rid of my tent, I couldn’t put it up. With all the pain, I struggled to do it.
“I can’t go for walks like I used to. It starts to get uncomfortable and painful.

“I struggle coming down the stairs with my left knee. I struggle to get comfortable in bed or when sat on the sofa. My left knee gives way sometimes, like when I am carrying a heavy shopping bag.

“I can’t play with my grandson, who is five, and I won’t be able to play with my great nephew when he is older.”

Pirelli Tyres Limited, of Derby Road, Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 11(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The company was fined £280,000 and ordered to pay £4,703.43 in costs at Carlisle Crown Court on 10 May 2024.

International Rubber and Tyre Recycling Limited, of Moorhead Lane, Shipley, West Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 11(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The company was fined £9,000 and ordered to pay £4,566.13 in costs at Carlisle Crown Court on 10 May 2024.

DCS Multiserve Limited, of Mylord Crescent, Camperdown Industrial Estate, Newcastle, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The company was fined £2,600 and ordered to pay £15,000 in costs at Carlisle Crown Court on 10 May 2024.

HSE inspector Matthew Tinsley said: “The fines imposed on these companies should be a warning to those responsible for the effective management of contractors and effective supervision of employees that the courts, and HSE, take a failure to follow the regulations extremely seriously. It also highlights the risks of improvised work methods using unsuitable equipment. HSE will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Nathan Cook and

supported by HSE paralegal officer Louisa Shaw.

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Company fined as worker falls through roof and fractures back

A company in Manchester has been fined £20,000 after an employee fell through a roof and suffered serious injuries.

The 24-year-old, employed by Hightech Roofing N/W Limited, was repairing a roof on a building in Blackburn when they fell approximately 4.8 metres through a roof light on 3 August 2022.

The employee suffered a broken foot and ankle as well as a fractured vertebrae.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Hightech Roofing N/W Limited failed to ensure the work on the roof was properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a manner that was as safe as reasonably practicable. While on the roof, operatives used orientated strand boards as crawl boards to move around the roof. The boards were placed where employees needed to step, but did not cover the roof lights, which led to the worker falling.

The company also failed to assess the specific risks arising from the need to work on or over fragile surfaces and failed to consider risks arising from employees working in proximity to the edge of the roof. No edge protection had been installed at the gable end of the building.

HSE guidance states those carrying out roof work must be trained, competent and instructed in use of the precautions required. A ‘method statement’ is the common way to help manage work on roofs and communicate the precautions to those involved. More on this can be found at: [Construction – Roof work industry health & safety (hse.gov.uk)]

Hightech Roofing N/W Limited, of Grimshaw Street, Failsworth, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4 of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £5,858.46 in costs at Preston Magistrates' Court on 9 May 2024.

HSE inspector Sam Eves said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and supported by HSE paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

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