Newsletter March 2018

The Association has a web site (under construction): - www.hgsafety.co.uk **HSE Web Link** http://www.hse.gov.uk/

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Topics

- **The hard facts about Hard Hats**
- **A Focus on eye protection**
- **Common Issues**
- **Prosecution – Unlicensed and unsafe asbestos removal work in primary school**
- **Picture Gallery**

Please note that the Association's email address is office@hgsafety.co.uk

The hard facts about Hard Hats – is an interesting article on the selection, wearing, storage, maintenance and inspection of hard hats, we are sure some of you will be enlightened and some even educated on the sometimes exclusive hard hats on construction sites.

A focus on eye protection – is an interesting article on eye protection giving advice on selection and actions to be taken if anyone suffers an eye injury.

Common Issues found on construction site we visited last month.

Prosecution – once again a recent prosecution and its consequences if you get it wrong.

The hard facts about Hard Hats

A user friendly guide relating to another piece of essential personal protective equipment (PPE), all served with a good helping of common sense...

Firstly, protective headwear should not be an inconvenience, nor is it a fashion statement; it is a crucial piece of PPE designed to save lives and to prevent injury. Follow our simple guidance and you won't go too far wrong.

The speeds and forces involved with falling objects can be staggering, with the humble one penny coin having a terminal velocity of over 60 feet per second! Or to put that into perspective, if a falling object hits you, it will hurt, lots! Falling objects are only one consideration - potentially serious head injuries can arise from seemingly innocuous bumps.

It is often a mandatory requirement to wear a safety helmet, with many people required to wear one on a daily basis; selecting the right one for you is essential.

Selection

As with most Health and Safety matters, and in particular the selection of PPE & RPE, we are firm believers in worker involvement. Find out the likes and dislikes from previous protective headgear, involve your local supplier to explore the ranges available, then put your hands on some samples to trial, demonstrate and assess.

Consider what other PPE is required, such as hearing protection or eye / face protection; can it be combined into one unit for additional protection, increased comfort and better "wear-ability"?

It can quite literally be a fatal mistake to select inferior or incorrectly specified head protection. Yet again we would recommend selecting a reputable supplier authorised to distribute a recognised brand; there are many examples of counterfeit PPE being distributed and worn throughout the UK construction industry.

As with any equipment, a CE mark is a necessity as is conforming to the relevant European Standard; in the context of this article we shall consider (BS) EN 397:2012 - the required standard for Industrial Safety Helmets. From this specification you can expect the hat to perform in temperatures from -20o C to +150oC if desired, electrically insulated up to 440v, will resist lateral deformation, and should you ever need it, resist splashes from molten metal (fingers crossed you won't!).

Other features to consider would include the need for a chin strap, ventilation, colour (why not select high viz?), a ratchet tightening mechanism and overall adjustability, nylon webbing straps, comfort padding, integral visor, position and availability of absorbent sweat bands; all of this can be expected from a unit costing well under £10.

Wearing

Quite obviously, a hard hat will only protect you if it's being worn... and worn correctly!

It should be adjusted to fit the wearer, worn securely and level so that it cannot become dislodged. Wearing a hard hat backwards will reduce its performance considerably, the beck is designed to deflect objects away from the face and torso. "Woolly" hats should not be worn underneath a hard hat as it will compromise the performance and could cause it to fall off... onto someone working below!

Something that is often overlooked is the sizing; you wouldn't wear any other ill fitting garment, would you? Measure your head and select a helmet befitting of the circumference of your priceless cranium.

Wear a chin strap if you are required to work overhead, regularly bend over or work in windy conditions; you want your hat to be in position when you need it in order to prevent or to lessen the effects of an impact.

Whilst the wearing of hardhats is often mandatory and enforced on site, less attention is given to the wearing of a hard hat CORRECTLY; it is up to you to ensure that this is the case.

Storage, maintenance and Inspection

A hard hat will only offer maximum protection if it is in good condition.

We'll get the contentious subject of the "expiry date" out of the way first. A hard hat is typically marked with the year and month of manufacture embossed internally on the body of the hat. Many people state that you must replace a hard hat after 3 or 5 years after the date of manufacture - not true.

We would suggest a more common sense approach. There are many factors that affect its performance, such as its exposure to direct sunlight, chemicals, moisture, other contaminants and its lifestyle in general. It is worth adhering to the manufacturers recommendations when it comes to the "in life" use but remember that a new hat may have been stored for a couple of years before it begins its working life.

A hat should be disposed of in the following circumstances:- if; it has been subject to a significant impact, deep scratches, say any more than 20% of the overall thickness, the webbing / harness is damaged or frayed, the body is distorted, dented or cracked.

It almost goes without saying that you should never modify, drill, paint, spray or adapt a hard hat. Any such modification could compromise the strength of the unit.

Look after your hat in general, keep it clean with warm soapy water only and don't leave it rattling around where it can get damaged, lost or stolen; inspect it on a regular basis for visual signs of damage or general wear and tear.

If this is a piece of equipment that you wear on a daily basis in a relatively harsh environment then maybe you should consider changing it every 18-24 months, if you're an infrequent site visitor then it should last you a very long time with a bit of TLC.

With all of the above in mind and the crucial role that a hard hat plays, is it unreasonable to suggest that they should be replaced more regularly when the unit cost is so low?

In summary; wear your safety helmet when required to do so and look after it, it will then look after you when you most need it to do so!

A focus on eye protection

Vision is possibly our most valued sense and yet whether at home or at work, people often neglect those squishy orbs that allow us the privilege of near perfect 20:20 vision. Here's your lowdown on eye protection to help you keep yours safe.

Firstly; "Do I have to pay for my own eye protection?"

No, as with any RPE, employers cannot levy charges when it comes to items issued in the interests of protecting your safety and health.

Weather you require a face shield, goggles, safety glasses, safety glasses with prescription lenses or anything in between your employer cannot and should not charge you for PPE.

Now that's out of the way; "What type of eye protection do I need?"

Before relying on PPE, can you make the process or substance safer by design? You've got to look at the hazard and decide how you can be harmed. Here are some examples of how your eyes could become damaged...

- A blow or impact to the eye, walking into a scaffold pole for example.
- Scratches and abrasions caused by the ingress of dust, dirt, swarf or other solid particles, hopefully not as speed!
- Penetrating or cutting injuries from foreign bodies travelling at speed i.e. during the use of power tools.
- Chemical burns from exposure to substances harmful to health, usually in either solid or liquid form.
- Radiation exposure to damaging UV rays i.e. welding arc, lasers or even strong lighting or sunshine.

Certain PPE is better suited to protecting from certain hazards...

Good old safety spectacles or safety glasses are typically made of polycarbonate and have many advantages; comfortable, light, inexpensive, durable and most of all will offer good protection from impact and ingress injuries from lower risk level tasks such as the use of hand tools or general site activities.

Where powered hand tools are used such as cutting / grinding equipment or there is a likelihood of splashing, safety goggles would be more appropriate. These create a seal around the periphery of the eyes and are held in place by an elasticised head band.

Full face shields can be bulky however they do protect not only just the eyes, but the entire face. These are particularly appropriate for higher risk activities and can be very effective against protecting against UV rays in the form or welders masks, they are also great for keeping liquid droplets away from the skin & mucus membranes.

For added protection against multiple hazards and increased wearer comfort, it is always worth considering the use of combined PPE and or RPE. There are many options available to chose from such as full face RPE offering both respiratory, face and eye protection. Hard hats can be purchased to offer all or a combination of head, eye, face and hearing protection... Speak to your workforce, try a few designs and select the most appropriate PPE to the task, environment, hazard and not forgetting, THE USER!

"What specification eye protection should I use?"

A CE mark is always a good start, as is selection the appropriate harmonized standard, in this instance we shall focus on BSEN166:2002 and in particular the impact ratings.

Impact resistance is tested in laboratory conditions by firing steel Ball Bearings at the eye protection to rate & prove what impact speeds it can withstand.

- **BSEN166 Part F** withstands impacts of up to **45 m/s**, acceptable for most general tasks
- **BSEN166 Part B** withstands impacts of up to **120 m/s**, appropriate for most Angle Grinders and "Stihl" saws
- **BSEN166 Part A** will withstand impacts of up to **190 m/s** (425 mph!!) and are usually reserved for higher risk sectors.

Take a look at your eye protection and see if its adequate for your job?

Also consider what additional features may be beneficial; sun tint, UV filters, anti misting, anti glare or anti scratch coatings and having a storage case is always a good idea to prevent damage & contamination.

Wearing eye protection.

Correctly specified and correctly worn eye protection will offer the wearer a good degree of protection to either eliminate or mitigate eye injuries.

Eye protection that is worn around your neck, covering your brow or protecting the dashboard of your van will offer you no protection whatsoever!

Wear your eye protection whenever you are required to do so, if site rules dictate, if your risk assessment tells you to or if common sense suggests that it's a good idea. Wear your eye protection every single time, even for very short jobs. You eyes are far too valuable and far too delicate to take chances with.

"I've injured my eye, what should I do?"

Let's say that you weren't wearing your eye protection, or maybe you were and yet you've still managed to injure your eye, what should you be doing... and please appreciate that this is general advice!

A very minor, frontal injury to the eye should usually clear after 24 hrs so see your first aider if you're in doubt. If its still causing pain or discomfort after this time then seek medical advice.

DO NOT apply pressure, touch or rub your eye, if there is a solid particle in there then you'll be making things a whole lot worse; it sounds hard to resist but please heed this advice.

If you have a large foreign body in your eye, do not remove it as again you could be making the situation a lot worse.

It is often appropriate to flush your eye to rid it of solid particles or chemical products. This should be done using clean, sterile water (ideally an eye wash station) for 10-15 minutes or until the pain eases.

It is advised to seek medical attention for all chemical eye injuries and it is always best to provide the medical team with the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the product in use so that they can best assess & treat the condition.

Other instances where you should seek immediate, emergency medical attention would include bleeding from the eye, deformation of the eyeball, foreign bodies that cannot be washed out, cuts in OR around the eye, signs of infection, severe pain and loss or distortion of vision.

What should I do after an eye injury.

Keep the eye clean, protected and covered if advised to do so. Do not return to work if it will impede your recovery and consider your limitations if vision has not yet fully recovered.

If an eye injury has occurred when eye protection was being worn then it's time to go back to the drawing board, report and investigate the accident, select more appropriate PPE once this risk has been controlled / reduced by other means.

We're big advocates that good health and safety should be workable and common sense; please take a moment to reflect on how your life could be effected by an eye injury; a full or partial loss of vision would be devastating for many, not being able to enjoy the many privileges that we often take for granted... such as earning a living, driving, seeing you loved ones and savouring live sports on a 3D HD 5K TV!

Common Issues

Chris Livall

Following last month's visits my concerns are traffic management. Many sites however small need to risk assess the traffic management associated to the site. Assessments should consider traffic routes in and out of site, with particular attention to whether one way systems can be introduced, reversing areas also restricting parking on site so reducing the risk of sighting vehicle movements and restricting the delivery of material.

Also physical barriers must be produced for the segregation of pedestrians and plant, dedicated cross over points, safety signage and traffic management plans must be portrayed at site induction stage. Weekly inspection of traffic management should be implemented and records monitored as good practice

Nick Jones

I have noted on more than one occasion within the past month, personnel smoking within the site welfare facilities, within the building being constructed or refurbished and even within the company vehicles parked on site. Notwithstanding the fire risk, smoking in enclosed places has been banned since 2007.

Referred to as smoke free legislation it makes the act of smoking in smoke free premises an offence. For employers or persons in control of premises that permit the act of smoking in a smoke free place (or vehicle) is also an offence. If a vehicle is shared with other persons it must be smoke free. Any designated smoke free place/ vehicle must have an official no smoking sign visibly displayed. Smoking in public places and the workplace is dealt with as a public health matter within Great Britain.

The Department of Health takes the lead on this in England. As Health and Safety advisor I have had to bring matters of concern to the attention of the employer, particularly as it involved a number of smokers and/or there was a failure to display warning notices. I would like to remind all members to review your smoke free workplace procedures at the earliest opportunity.

Adrian Hatton

During our site travels we continue to see unsafe working practices by contractors whilst carrying out work at height. We would like to remind our members and their contractors of the importance of such practices being carried out safely from both a legal and moral point of view.

The main legislation which applies is as follows:-

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
It places a duty on all employers "to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work of all their employees and others who may be affected by their work.
Sections 2 & 3
This act applies to all work activities
It requires employers to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the Health and Safety of their employees, other people and members of the public who may be affected by their work
Section 7 – The Employee
It shall be the duty of the employee while at work to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of himself and others who may be affected by their actions
Section 8
No person shall recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of Health, Safety and Welfare

The Work at Height Regulations 2005
The regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury
They place duties on employers, and those who control any work at height activity. (building managers/owners etc)

Work at Height Regulations 2005 Regulation 4
Every employer shall ensure that work at height is

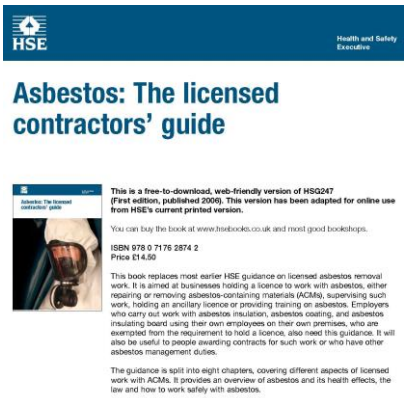
- Properly planned (inc emergencies/rescues)
- Appropriately supervised
- Carried out in a manner which is "SFARP" safe
- Only carried out when the weather conditions do not jeopardize the health and Safety of any person

Unlicensed and unsafe asbestos removal work in primary school

A construction company has been fined after it carried out unsafe and unlicensed asbestos removal during the refurbishment works in a junior school in Dursley in October 2016.

Cheltenham Magistrates heard how R F Gardiner Limited removed asbestos in an unsafe manner without an appropriate licence to carry out the work. Operatives working for the company were exposed to high levels of airborne asbestos fibres during the removal work during which no water suppression was used and the workmen had not been face-fit tested for the face mask they were wearing.

An enclosure under negative pressure was not set up to contain the asbestos fibres released during the removal and as such asbestos fibres were spread to the surrounding area.


HSE

Health and Safety Executive

Asbestos: The licensed contractors' guide

This is a free-to-download, web-friendly version of HSG247 (First edition, published 2006). This version has been adapted for online use from HSE's current printed version.

You can buy the book at www.hsebooks.co.uk and most good bookshops.

ISBN 978 0 7176 2874 2
Price £14.50

This book replaces most earlier HSE guidance on licensed asbestos removal work. It is aimed at businesses holding a licence to work with asbestos, either repairing or removing asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), supervising such work, holding an ancillary licence or providing training on asbestos. Employers who carry out work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coating, and asbestos insulating board using their own employees on their own premises, who are exempted from the requirement to hold a licence, also need this guidance. It will also be useful to people awarding contracts for such work or who have other asbestos management duties.

The guidance is split into eight chapters, covering different aspects of licensed work with ACMs. It provides an overview of asbestos and its health effects, the law and how to work safely with asbestos.

Workers also had no way of decontaminating onsite on completion of the work.

Poor planning

HSE investigators found that poor planning of the work meant that the unsafe and unlicensed asbestos removal work was undertaken.

- **R F Gardiner Limited** – of Cirencester Road, Gloucestershire, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 8(1), 11(1) and 16 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and was fined £28,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,141.80.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector James Lucas said

“The company in this case should have ensured appropriate measures were identified during the planning process to include the engagement of a licensed asbestos contractor to carry out correct control measures and safe working practices for the removal of the asbestos.

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

Picture Gallery

Spot the scaffolder? ☹

There is nothing like good site access! ☹

Excellent People/Plant segregation ☺