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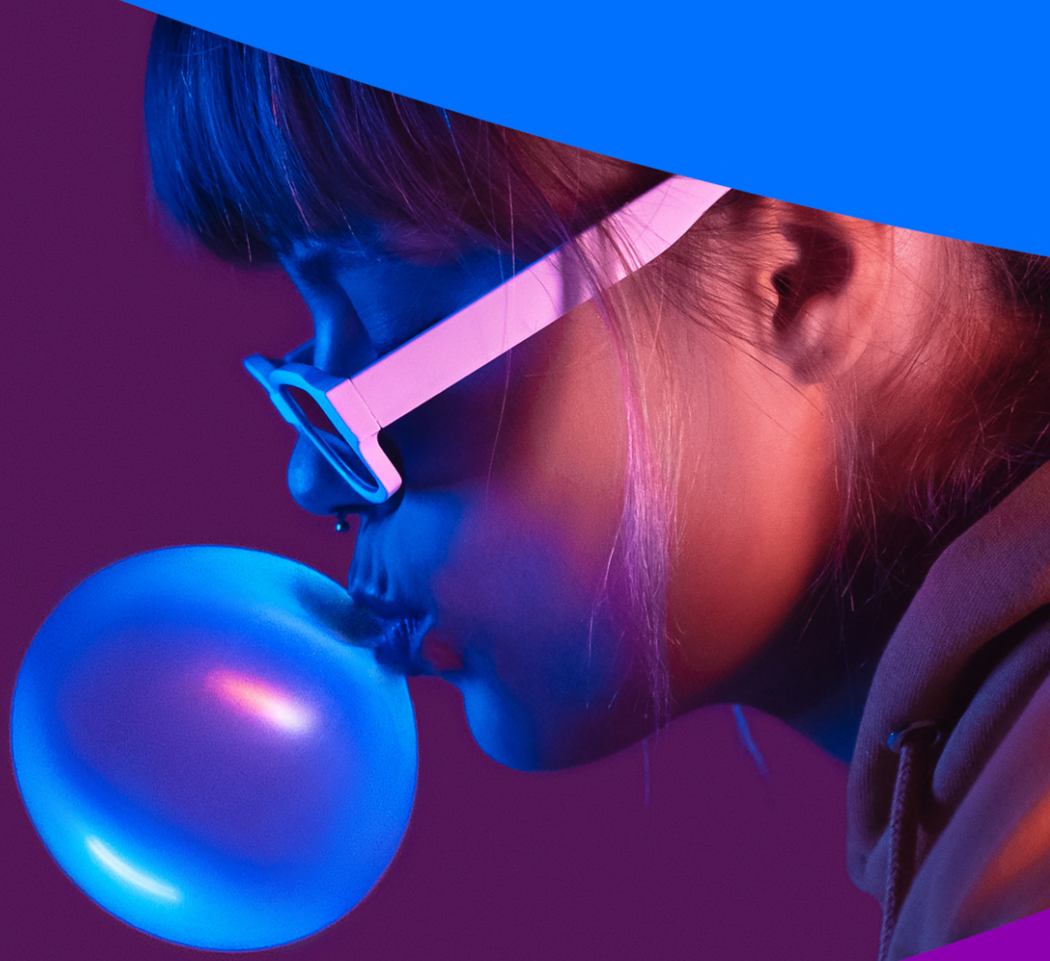

Health & Safety bulletin

September 2024

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Round up

Silicosis risk to stone worktop engineers in spotlight

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HSE publishes research report to determine whether DSE Regulations are still relevant

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Key contacts

Gavin Reese
+44 20 3060 6895
gavin.reese@rpc.co.uk

Mamata Dutta
+44 20 3060 6819
mamata.dutta@rpc.co.uk

Rashna Vaswani
+44 20 3060 6866
rashna.vaswani@rpc.co.uk

Co-authored by Sally Lord, Catherine Zakarias-Welch & Aimee Talbot

Illegal asbestos removal results in jail term for director and £30,000 fine for company

The importance of safe asbestos removal and protecting the health and safety of employees was brought to the forefront in a recent decision at Southampton Crown Court. The refurbishment of a commercial unit into student accommodation was to be carried out by Cavendish Winchester Ltd. The HSE received notice that asbestos insulated board had been removed illegally and carried out an investigation.

The investigation uncovered that an asbestos removal company had been approached to provide a quote for removing asbestos insulated board (AIB) but, the company decided not to go ahead with the professional removal and instead instructed its employees to remove an estimated ten tonnes of asbestos during the refurbishment in late 2019 and early 2020.

Despite being put on notice of the risks involved in the removal, the directors of the company jeopardised the health and safety of their employees by instructing them just to save on costs. The HSE highlighted that the company also obtained a new quote for the removal of a much smaller quantity of AIB with the aim of 'covering their tracks'.

The directors pleaded guilty to Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA) 1974 which in turn caused their company to breach Section 4(1) of the Act. Director Steven Davies was given an 8-month sentence in prison and his co-director, Neil Bolton was given a suspended sentence of 4 months, with 250 hours of unpaid work and costs of over £5,123. In addition, the company was fined £30,000.

This decision highlights the importance of safe removal of all asbestos materials and protecting workers from asbestos-related disease in the future.

The HSE's website includes guidance on asbestos safety, the duties of managing asbestos in buildings, and when asbestos work is licensable.

Home

Nightmare at a funfair leaves woman with life changing injuries

A fine valued at over 2.4 times the company's profit was given as a result of an accident at Funderpark funfair in Phillpotts Farm, Hillingdon, that occurred in April 2018.

Khadra Ali was on a fast motion ride called 'Xcelerator', next to her daughter when she was ejected at speed, struck the barrier of another ride, and fell to the ground. Mrs Ali, who was not suitably restrained to her seat, sustained numerous injuries including internal bleeding, a significant head injury and multiple fractures to her body.

The HSE investigation uncovered a cascade of failures by all of those involved in the ride. There were electrical and mechanical failures in the design of the ride by the manufacturer, Perrin Stevens Ltd. In particular, failings were found in the ride's seat restrain system. In addition, the ride's operating manual provided by Perrin Stevens Ltd did not include essential information on inspection and maintenance.

The owner of the ride, Derek Hackett, had not been maintaining the ride properly, and whilst the ride had been inspected, certain parts were found to be missing and/or damaged. Importantly, the ride operator had not checked the restraint bar before starting the ride or noticed that Mrs Ali required assistance and stopped the ride. The ride was not being operated by the requisite two operators.
DMG Technical Ltd, who had been appointed as the inspection body and had responsibility for issuing the declaration of the operation compliance (DOC), did not identify issues with the switches and/or the maintenance of the ride when it carried out its inspection in 2017.

At a hearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 7 May 2024, all parties involved in the operation and safety of the ride were found to be at fault. The parties pleaded guilty to several breaches of the HSWA 1974 with the director of DMG Technical Ltd, David Geary, being handed the most severe sentence of 44 weeks, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to pay £24,000 in costs. The judge also stated that, had Mr Geary not pleaded guilty, his sentence would have been much greater.

Home

Vehicle accident during nightshift results in leg amputation and fine of £400,000

Sharon Bramhall was working a nightshift at Baker & Baker Products UK Limited, a food manufacturing company, when she suffered a serious accident involving a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP). Mrs Bramhall had been a 'banksman' for a colleague whilst they were operating the MEWP. Unfortunately, as the MEWP turned, it crushed Mrs Bramhall's leg. As a result of the accident, Mrs Bramhall was hospitalised for 3 months, had 9 operations and was required to have her left leg amputated below the knee.

The HSE investigation into the accident uncovered multiple failings by the food manufacturing company. It identified a lack of training, instructions, and information for both the operator of the MEWP and the banksman. In addition, the company policy that the banksman should be a trained MEWP operator was not adhered to. It further stated that the company should have had *'suitable and sufficient safe system of work when escorting MEWPs from a parked position to point of use'* and ensured that all company policies were followed.

In March 2024, the company pleading guilty to having breached sections 2(1) and 33(1) HSWA 1974. The company was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay £7,266 in costs.

After the hearing, the HSE stated that *"vehicles continue to be a major cause of serious injuries in the workplace and the first principle of any employer should be to keep people and vehicles apart".*

Home

Worker has leg amputation after accident with mushroom filling machine

In another tragic accident, 29-year-old Luka Ilic was working at Howden Enterprises Ltd t/a Hughes Mushrooms in East Yorkshire, when his leg became trapped inside a mushroom filling machine.

Luka was cleaning the machine when he climbed onto it to remove the last remaining parts of the compost. Unfortunately, the machine was then turned on which resulted in Luke's legs being trapped in the rotating blades. Following the accident, Luke's leg was amputated below the knee.

During the investigation, the HSE highlighted the importance of safe systems of work, including ensuring '*robust isolation and safe operating procedures were in place and followed*'.

Howden Enterprises Ltd was fined £73,333 and required to pay £7,522.60 in costs after it pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) HSWA 1974.

The HSE has produced guidance on the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998, setting out the risks that need to be managed if a business uses work equipment or is providing work equipment for others to use. This can be found on its website.

The HSE stated "*The importance of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment which reflects all actual practical activities cannot be underestimated. It is vital to ensure there are effective systems of work and physical controls which are implemented, supervised and used by all those involved. This incident could have easily been avoided with a robust isolation procedure and padlock for each worker involved*".

Home

Excavator accident results in death of 22-year-old worker

Materials Movement Limited, based in Hertfordshire, was contracted to carry out ground clearance works at Sarazens Gardens in Brampton in November 2019, to make way for the construction of a new housing estate.

James Rourke, a site engineer, was attaching 'warning' work signs to fencing around the site when he was tragically hit and run over by an excavator.

The company was found to have failed to manage and plan the work that was being undertaken at Sarazen Gardens. In particular, it failed to ensure that no employees were working anywhere close to the excavator.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15(2) Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 on 22 March 2024. It was fined £133,330 and required to pay £8,500 in costs.

The HSE confirmed the death of Mr Rouke could have been avoided if the company had properly planned, instructed and supervised the work, and highlighted the five main precautions that should be taken into account when using excavators: exclusion, clearance, visibility, plant and vehicle marshaller and bucket attachment.

Home

Worker crushed in tragic accident resulting in £175,000 fine

The importance of having a safe system in place when working with excavators was highlighted again in the tragic death of Liam McArdle. Mr McArdle was working for Erith Plant Services, in Swanscombe, when a demolition grab that was attached to an excavator fell on him, fatally crushing him.

The HSE investigation uncovered multiple failings in the way the excavators and attachments were being loaded and unloaded. The company failed to ensure that HGV drivers were fully engaging the quick hitch when moving attachments. There was also a lack of suitable supervision at the company and no clear separation of pedestrians and vehicles at the company's workshop.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of HSWA 1974 and was fined £175,000 with a costs order of £37,804.

The HSE stated: "*This tragic death serves as an important reminder that workers need to be trained and that there is always the potential for an attachment to fall during the operation of excavators. Employers need to ensure that work practices are maintained to keep workers away from the danger areas during lifting activities*".

There is guidance for employers on planning and organising lifting operations on the HSE website, aimed at ensuring the risks of carrying out lifting operations are managed appropriately and safely.

Home

Pork Pie maker's failings causes amputations at two different sites

Pork Farms Ltd was found to have unsafe conveyors which resulted in two workers losing their fingers at two of their Nottingham bakeries.

The first incident happened at Tottle Bakery whilst a worker was trying to unblock the conveyor and their hand became trapped between a chain and a sprocket. Just a few weeks after that incident, a second accident took place at Riverside Bakery involving a rotating shaft on a conveyor.

The HSE investigation into the incidents identified a failure at both bakeries to ensure the dangerous parts of the conveyors were adequately guarded. Had appropriate safety measures been implemented, including training, policies and the correct parts been used, those accidents could have been avoided. At the Tottle Bakery, an unsuitable interlock had been used, which subsequently failed and was not identified. At the Riverside Bakery, a section of the driveshaft was unguarded and the spacing was sufficient for an arm to fit through. Inadequate inspections failed to identify the unsafe systems.

The company admitted breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of HSWA 1974 and was fined £600,000 for the incident at Tottle Bakery and £200,000 for the incident at Riverside Bakery. It was also ordered to pay £6,482 in costs.

Home

Employees caught up in major pizza maker's machinery

Two workers were injured using machinery whilst working at a major supermarket pizza supplier and manufacturer, Stateside Food Limited. Both incidents involved an inadequately guarded conveyor belt and resulted in life changing injuries for the company's employees.

The HSE investigation identified numerous failings including that the Bolton-based company had not properly checked that guard systems were working correctly. Guarding systems could also be easily disabled, giving access to dangerous parts of the machinery.

Stateside Foods Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of HSWA 1974 and was fined £800,000 with a costs order of £5,340.

The HSE confirmed this decision was to be seen as 'a message to the industry' on the seriousness of safeguarding its workers and managing the risks of working with dangerous machinery appropriately.

Home

Delivery driver gets third degree burns after striking overhead powerlines

Accidents involving power lines results in many injuries and deaths every year. One such accident took place when a worker was delivering a load of hardcore aggregate to Plants Galore Horticulture Limited, based in Essex. The worker was driving a lorry that had a tipper and grab arm, which, after delivering the load, hit the powerlines that were overhead.

The worker mistakenly believed he had actually hit a telephone cable and decided to leave his vehicle to investigate. However, as soon as he touched the door handle, he received an electric shock resulting in third degree burns to his body and severe injuries to his arm, knee and feet.

The HSE investigation identified that the company had failed to provide information on risks, including the location of the powerlines are located, and risk management procedures that should be followed. Such procedures should have included ground-level barriers setting out the safety zone to keep workers (and machinery) away from the powerlines.

The company was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £4,000 in costs for breaching Section 4(2) HSWA 1974.

There is guidance on the HSE website to assist workers and employers on working near overhead powerlines, this is particularly important for work that involves long equipment and high vehicles as they are at high risk.

Home

Volunteer dies whilst working on the Wilts and Berks Canal

Wilts and Berks Canal Trust were in the process of restoring part of the canal in 2016 when a volunteer, 62-year-old Peter Konitzer, was crushed to death. He was removing wall supports erected for external excavation when the section collapsed on him.

The HSE and Wiltshire police investigated and found that the Trust had failed to ensure volunteers' safety; the supports were unfit for purpose and the process for removing the supports was unclear.

Section 3.1 HSWA 1974 states that: "*It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety*." In June 2024, the Trust was fined £30,000 after it was held guilty of breaching this section of HSWA at Swindon Magistrates Court. It also paid costs of £10,822.

The HSE inspector, James Lucas, referred to the incident as *"tragic and wholly avoidable*" if the works had been properly planned and carried out. He also pointed out that organisations need to ensure safe ways of working including providing sufficient suitable information, instruction and training.

Home

Delivery driver electrocuted by overhead power line

The HSE has reported that a 41-year-old delivery driver died from injuries sustained whilst delivering crushed concrete to a building site in Reading in November 2020.

Findings by the HSE revealed that BBM Contracts, the principal contractor, chose an area situated under an 11kv overhead powerline to deliver crushed concrete, and the crane arm of Mr Levi Alleyne's lorry touched it, causing an electrical charge which electrocuted him. BBM reportedly knew of the existence of the lines but failed to give consideration to ways of avoiding them, nor did they warn of their presence. Following the incident, a different route was used for delivery.

Under section 13(1) of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015, the principal contractor must plan, manage and monitor the construction phase and coordinate matters relating to health and safety during the construction phase to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, construction work is carried out without risks to health or safety.

The principal contractor was fined £30,000 after pleading guilty in June 2024 at Reading Magistrates' Court. Georgina Symons, HSE principal inspector, said that the dangers of overhead power cables are well known, and guidance and information is available from the HSE.

Home

Auctioneers fail to prevent cow trampling man to death

In November 2022, 75-year-old Huw Evans was knocked down and trampled to death by a cow. The incident happened when the cow escaped from being unloaded into a pen at Whitland Livestock market.

Another employee of JJ Morris Limited the company who runs the market, was also injured when trying to catch the cow. The cow was later captured by the police and put down.

The HSE's investigation found that the company did not have sufficient controls in place to prevent the accident nor was the market's risk assessment adequate. The company pleaded guilty to breaching sections .2(1) and (3) HSWA 1974 in June 2024, following which it was ordered to pay a £75,000 fine and £5,047.55 in costs.

Rhys Hughes, HSE inspector, referred to the tragic incident as "foreseeable and preventable" and that industry guidance should have been followed.

Home

Environmental

Illegal tyre waste site results £1.1m fine and imprisonment

Mr and Mrs Bedford were sentenced last month for illegally and unsafely operating a tyre waste facility. They had tried to flee to Spain after their activities had culminated in a fire at a site containing 600,000 tyres which burned for 3 weeks. The fire covered Bradford city centre in a "*black pall of stinking smoke*", and caused 25 schools to close, affecting over 14,000 pupils. It took 100 firefighters to extinguish the blaze, costing more than £1.1 million. While the fire was still ablaze, Mr Bedford continued to receive tyres at a second site in Doncaster.

Stuart Bedford and his wife Vicky had received several warnings and even a formal stop notice from the Environment Agency, Fire Service and Bradford Council. They were told that the former go-kart track, then used by them for dumping tyres, was vulnerable due to its proximity to housing, schools, care homes, medical facilities and railways. The tyres being stored at the site were stacked precariously higher than the treeline and nearby buildings and there were no fire breaks on site.

After the fire, the couple fled to Spain, where they were detained after an international arrest warrant was issued. They were then extradited to face charges of running waste operations without an environmental permit and storing waste in a manner likely to harm or cause pollution, to which they pleaded guilty.

The judge described Mr Bedford's conduct as deliberate, as he was allegedly familiar with the waste industry and knew that the number of tyres stored onsite was vastly more than he would have been able to legitimately store. On the other hand, his wife was found to be reckless, and a "straw" director of Equalityre Ltd. Mr Beford received to prison sentences of 12 and 8 months each, to be served concurrently. Mrs Bedford received a one-year community order and was ordered to undertake 15 days of rehabilitation activity.

Whilst tyres do not ignite easily, they release intense heat and dense black fumes when burning, contaminating the air with carbon oxides, hydrocarbons (especially polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), nitrogen oxides, halogenated acids and large quantities of soot and unburned material. In some cases, they also release oily liquids when burning. There is government guidance on the disposal of end-of-life tyres, including a weight limit and site restrictions on its website.

Home

Fore! Fly tipping on the putting green ends badly for all involved

Golf course owners near Gatwick Airport had built embankments to catch stray golf balls at Rusper Leisure Ltd, Worthing. It subsequently transpired that they were allowing waste to be illegally tipped and hoarded onsite.

Following an anonymous tip, the Environment Agency discovered that the golf course company were paid £70,000 by hauliers Cook & Son Ltd and Bell and Sons Construction Ltd to accept almost 700 lorry-loads of waste illegally offloaded over the course of 5 months in 2018 without prior authorisation. The golf course had been given permission from the local council only to use clean soil to raise the height of the embankment rather than the mixture of soil and builders' waste containing glass, wood, plastic, tarmac, brick, concrete and other material dumped by the hauliers. The golf company also used the waste to construct further embankments and stockpiled some of it close to woods on the edge of the golf course and in the club's car park.

In order to receive the waste onto the golf course, Rusper Leisure Ltd required an environmental permit. However, it claimed to have obtained planning permission from Mole Valley District Council, which it thought allowed it to bring waste onto the site. Neither of the hauliers enquired as to whether their actions were lawful. Waste transfer notes prepared by the hauliers lacked crucial information, including a description of the waste and whether it was hazardous, and where precisely on the golf course it was dumped.

Rusper Leisure Ltd was charged with breaching regulation 12(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. The hauliers were charges with breaching section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the dumped waste. All companies pleaded guilty. Rusper Leisure Ltd was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,000 for running a waste operation without a permit. Cook & Son Ltd was fined £24,000 with costs of £12,500 and Bell and Sons Construction Ltd was fined £12,000 with costs of £8,000. In addition, a victim surcharge of £170 was imposed on each defendant. The golf club has since closed down, reportedly due to financial difficulties.

Home

Ignoring storage advice results in sentencing for waste operators

In May 2024, prison sentences totalling 6.5 years and fines totalling more than £103,000 were imposed by Teeside Crown Court on six defendants responsible for three waste storage facilities. The six defendants (two companies, their directors and associates) were charged with various environmental offences, including failure to comply with enforcement notices, illegally depositing waste, and keeping waste in a manner likely to cause pollution. The defendants had repeatedly ignored warnings by the Environment Agency that each site represented a significant fire risk; a risk that materialised when first the Liverton site, and then the Eldon Brickworks site caught fire in April and August 2020 respectively.

The fire at the Liverton site burned for 9 days and destroyed the site, which was reportedly uninsured, impacting local residents who could not evacuate because of the Covid-19 national lockdown. Greenology (Teeside) Ltd received large investments from business partners to build a pyrolysis plant to turn the tyres into fuel oil. No pyrolysis plant was built, but excessive volumes of tyres were handled which threatened the environment.

Meanwhile, Falcons Two Ltd, operating on Eldon Brickworks, never complied with its environmental permit and continually stored excessive volumes of waste causing a major fire risk. The fire at Eldon Brickworks also burned for many days, partly due to the sheer amount of waste involved and the lack of firebreaks – which had been the subject of enforcement notices ignored by the site owners served the month prior to the blaze.

An Environment Agency investigation revealed that Jonathan Waldron, Laura Hepburn and Jonathan Guy Brudenell worked together to register several waste exemptions which allow low-level waste activity that does not require an environmental permit. However, after a fall out between them, Ms Hepburn went on to set up a new site, whilst Mr Brudenell, managed the Eldon Brickworks site under a false name. Mr Brudenell had previously been convicted of multiple fraud offences and was disqualified from acting as a director at the time. It transpired that he met Jonathan Waldron (operator of the Eldon Brickworks site, who was then serving time for robbery) in prison.

The waste companies Greenology (Liverton) Ltd, Selective Environmental Solutions Ltd and Greenology (Teesside) Ltd were fined £69,000, £14,666.66 and £20,000 respectively. Mr Brudenell was imprisoned for 2 years and 10 months, Ms Hepburn was given a suspended sentence of 2 years imprisonment, and 150 hours of unpaid community service and Mr Waldorn was sentenced to 20 months in prison, suspended for 2 years with requirements of probation supervision, rehabilitation and 150 of unpaid community service. He was also ordered to pay £9,000 in costs.

It is clear that the threat to health and life, as well as the impact on the environment, were key concerns of the Environment Agency in this matter. These cases emphasise the importance of promptly acting on an Environment Agency or local authority advice, complying with enforcement notices and, in respect of waste facilities, ensuring that fire breaks are put in place and that permits and exemptions are complied with. Government guidance on waste exemption criteria is available here.

Home

Round up

Silicosis risk to stone worktop engineers in spotlight

A recent spate of silicosis amongst young people working on engineered stone worktops has led the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) to call for a ban of the material after Australia's ban on use and import of the stone came into force in July. BOHS advises that dust controls and medical surveillance should be in place at all times, since cutting, breaking or grinding the material releases tiny crystalline particles of silica which, if inhaled, causes long term lung damage. Once inside the lungs, these particles cause inflammation and gradually lead to hardened and scarred lung tissue which does not function properly.

According to the NHS, silicosis takes a long time to develop after exposure (10-20 years), however, it can sometimes develop after 5-10 years of exposure, like asbestosis. Occasionally, silicosis can develop after only a few months when there is heavy exposure, as in the case of at least three younger men in the UK since mid-2023 who have developed the disease. BOHS estimates that there are more cases which have not been detected or reported. Over the last 20 years, a new form of silicosis has developed, which BOHS describe as 'an old problem in a new and nasty guise'.

The issue has also been discussed in Parliament. Whilst in January 2024, the government confirmed it had no plans to restrict the use of the material on the basis that the HSE is well-equipped to regulate respirable crystalline silica, it is not yet clear whether the new Labour government will do so. In the meantime, the HSE has been inspecting more than 1,000 manufacturing businesses that use materials containing silica and expects to publish its findings in due course. It released early findings in November 2023, which included concerns that, whilst there was some good practice, some businesses had not given any consideration at all to eliminate the risks from exposure to silica dust. Workers were not offered or made to wear respiratory protective equipment (RPE) whilst exposed to cutting equipment with no on-tool extraction and poorly maintained cutting equipment with ineffective extraction.

The condition has no known cure and it is expected to pose a significant challenge to doctors. Dr Christopher Barber, of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, said that a change in the law in the 1920s "*was successful in protecting the Sheffield cutlery workers*" which led to the industry switching to silica-free grinding wheels. The HSE states to be continuing to work with the industry to raise awareness and manage the risks of exposure, considering options for future intervention to ensure workers are protected.

Home

Gender bias endangering women's health in the workplace

Findings have emerged recently highlighting the impact of gender bias in the workplace.

Firstly, the HSE warned on International Women's Day that women working in heavy industry are still being provided with poorly fitting personal protective equipment (PPE). A survey revealed that PPE is overwhelmingly based on male body types and that this affects over 25% of women. Ill-fitting PPE can directly endanger women's safety, leading to modifications which compromise protection against workplace hazards. This is particularly the case with climbing harnesses, life jackets or air systems. Another shortcoming was the lack of maternity PPE, with 61% of pregnant women saying they had not been provided with items that would allow them to work safety.

Secondly, the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) has challenged the government's approach to regulating harmful chemicals, highlighting failures to consider the impacts of workplace exposure on women and to address substances harmful to human reproduction. The UK established its own REACH (UK Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction on chemicals) following its exit from the European Union, which had its own REACH.

26 chemicals were under consideration because of serious health concerns. BOHS has criticised the rationale used by UK REACH to determine its 2024 priorities, which include per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), formaldehyde, hazardous flame retardants and intentionally added microplastics. The inclusion of PFAS and microplastics is unsurprising in light of the significant media attention these substances have received in recent years. However, the UK has no strategy for dealing with reprotoxins (substances harmful to reproduction), which are not listed as a priority, in contrast to the EU REACH strategy.

Further, UK REACH does not focus on the gender-specific effects of chemical exposure in the workplace. BOHS said that the government's priorities "*demonstrate a lack of policy and focus on how women are impacted by chemicals at work, as well as in the home*". Of the 16 chemicals not deemed to be a priority, 10 are toxic to reproduction and six are more likely to have specific health impacts on women. In particular, BOHS highlighted cobalt salts (widely used in electric batteries and associated with gynaecological diseases); dimethylformamide (a reprotoxin restructured in European countries); polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs, used in rubber pitches and playgrounds); and two solvents (N,N-dimethylacetamide and 1-ethyl-2-pyrrolidone) used in textile manufacturing, electrical wire insulation, pharmaceutical, agrochemicals and membrane manufacture. It remains to be seen if the new government will set a new agenda for UK REACH, or whether the 2025 priorities will look different.

Home

HSE publishes research report to determine whether DSE Regulations are still relevant

31 years ago, on 1 January 1993, the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 came into force in order to implement a European Directive from 1990 on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) (Directive 90/270/EEC 29 May 1990). At the time, DSE related ailments included Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) and eye problems. The HSE published guidance on working with DSE and how to comply with the Regulations. The guidance was updated in 2003 and that version is still in use today.

The HSE has now published a research report "Reviewing and updating the evidence base on the hazards and risks for musculoskeletal disorder symptoms and visual problems regulated by the Display Screen Equipment Regulations", which outlines the current issues of working with DSE, risks and health problems to determine whether the Regulations are necessary, proportionate and remain relevant. It states that various types of MSDs and visual health consequences have been associated with work related use of DSE, but that the links are mainly self-reported, rather than clinically diagnosed health conditions.

In addition, it also highlights that most risk exposures of concern pre-1992, for example, screen quality and keyboard activation force are no longer issues for DSE and keyboards. There is also no evidence of a link between permanent eye damage from long-term viewing of equipment which is covered by the Regulations. However, that correcting visual conditions with glasses and the appropriate distance could reduce discomfort for users whilst working. The report also concludes that risk factors for MSDs relate to usage, posture, work pattern and environment/setup.

Home