



South Cumbria &
North Lancashire Branch

Joint meeting 21 March 2024



South Cumbria Occupational
Health & Safety Group

Thursday 21 February 2024

Venue: Westmorland suite, Crooklands Hotel, Crooklands. Kendal, LA7 7NW

Topic: *HSE update 2024*

Speaker: Steven Boyd, Principal Inspector of Health and Safety, *HSE*, Carlisle

Geoff Price, Past Chairman, *South Cumbria & North Lancashire IOSH Branch* welcomed members and colleagues from *South Cumbria Occupational Health & Safety Group (SCOHSG)* to their joint monthly meeting. He then introduced our speaker, Steven Boyd, Principal Inspector of Health and Safety, *HSE*, Carlisle who had kindly agreed to give the group their annual *HSE* update.

Steve summarised the main topics that his presentation would cover:

1. Key *HSE* changes in 2023/24: strategy, the introduction of the Building Safety Regular and structural changes to the way *HSE* organises workplace inspections and accident investigations.
2. How *HSE*'s 2024/25 workplan builds on their 2023/24 workplan.
3. An overview of recent notable *HSE* prosecutions in the NW.

Steve then explained that *HSE*'s strategy builds on their aim of:

"...*Protecting People and Places* ..." with four main objectives to:

- *Reduce work related ill health*: especially mental health and stress.
- *Ensure people feel safe*: where they live and work.
- *Maintain Britain's workplace safety record*: as one of the safest countries to work in.
- *Enable industry to innovate safely*: by encouraging the development of effective, pragmatic risk management systems to prevent major incidents during the experimental stages of the new technologies needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

Steve agreed that it is often difficult to separate workplace stress from other stress factors in people's lives but explained that *HSE* Inspectors use requirements in the *HSE Management Standards* and specific information from *RIDDOR* reports to help employers and managers to develop management strategies that reduce employee's work stress levels and often also lead to more efficient ways of working.

He then showed members some of the health and safety statistics for **2022/23** that demonstrate the continuing need for effective workplace health and safety management.

1.8 million*: workers suffering from workplace ill health.

0.9 million*: workers suffering from work related stress, depression, or anxiety.

0.6 million*: workers sustaining a non-fatal workplace injury.

60,645**: work related non-fatal injuries to employees reported by employers.

0.5 million*: workers suffering from work related musculoskeletal disorders.

135** workers killed in work related accidents.

2268*** mesothelioma deaths.

* *Labour Force Survey* estimates, based on self-reports by people in work during the previous 12 months.

** *RIDDOR 2022/23*.

*** Counts from 2021 death certificates.

It was interesting to note the significant differences between objective data and self-reported data.

Steve then explained that the *Building Safety Regulator* has been established as a separate section under the umbrella of *HSE*. The Regulator was established under *The Building Safety Act 2022* to:

- Regulate higher-risk buildings,
- Raise safety standards of all buildings and
- Help professionals in design, construction, and building control, to improve their competence.

Under this Act *HSE* has been given responsibility for regulating high-rise residential buildings that with seven or more floors and buildings that are 18 metres in height and include at least two residential units as well as regulating care homes and hospitals during their design and construction phases. During 2023 a register of key buildings was developed. It is now mandatory to register all buildings covered by the Act and an Inspection system is in place.

Steve then explained that *HSE* has reorganised the way that it carries out workplace inspections and accident investigations to make better use of *HSE's* skills and resources. There are now two groups of *HSE* Inspectors: those who undertake routine workplace health and safety inspections and those who specialise in workplace accident and incident investigations. *HSE* also has a dedicated team who are assisting with the Government's Covid-19 Inquiry.

Steve then discussed *HSE's* Inspection and education workplan for 2024/25. He explained that it built on the previous year's workplan and reminded members that even when *HSE* Inspectors visited a workplace for a themed inspection this did not stop them from noticing, and dealing with other workplace health and safety problems when they were on site. *HSE* inspection topics include:

- *Fabricated metal working and engineering:*
 - with a health focus on metal working fluids (asthma trigger) and weld fume (known carcinogen).
 - looking at: safe systems of work, extraction systems and respiratory protection.
- *Woodworking:*
 - with a health focus on dust (asthma trigger).
 - looking at: extraction systems, RPE (face fit, care, training, air fed helmet for employees with beards), machinery safety (guarding).
- *Management of asbestos:*
 - Duty to manage and to protect tradesmen as well as all other building users.
 - Clear, accessible survey reports.
 - Clear management plan with information about how asbestos is monitored and who is responsible for implementing the plan on a day-to-day basis.
- *Agriculture:*
 - Hybrid approach due to the wide range of small businesses:
 - Targeted inspections.
 - Compliance events.
 - Communications eg posters.
 - Key topics:
 - Workplace transport.
 - Management of cattle.
 - Slurry pits.
- *Construction:*
 - Continued health focus:
 - Dust: wood and silica.
 - Asbestos.
 - Manual handling.

- Refurbishment and small house builders:
 - Managing site safety and welfare.
 - Internal fall risks
 - Falls from height – use of tower scaffolding and guard rails.
- *Use of dichloromethane* (not available to the general public):
 - Wheel refurbishment: need for use of dedicated LEV, appropriate RPE; recommend specially designed tanks for stripping paint from alloy wheels at permanent workplaces.
 - Need for appropriate risk assessments and safe systems of work for the use of spray paint strippers and floor laying adhesives in transient and permanent workplaces.

In addition, Steve said that during 2024/25 HSE inspections are likely to include management of noise, potential COSHH risks in bakeries, motor vehicle repair workshops, and the plastics industry, as well as the use of isocyanates in workplaces.

Steve then discussed learning points from some of HSE's recent health and safety prosecutions in northwest England:

- *Forklift truck fatality during maintenance procedure:*
 - Untrained driver in vehicle while repairs being undertaken.
 - The forklift truck was in an unsafe condition.
 - The forklift truck had not been regularly examined as required by statute.

This was an avoidable fatality. It would not have happened if: the forklift truck had been checked and maintained, and the truck drivers and mechanics had received adequate training.

- *Critical injuries after falling 10 m through skylight:*
 - Roof work inadequately managed.
 - Netting to arrest potential falls from height not fully extended.
 - Inadequate training of workers.

This was an avoidable life-changing accident. It would not have happened if: it had been clear who was responsible for managing this job, an adequate risk assessment had been undertaken, and everyone involved had received adequate working at height training.

- *Arm amputation of mobile conveyor belt maintenance engineer:*
 - Visiting engineer not familiar with the factory conveyor belt system.
 - Engineer removed machine guard from conveyor belt to check nip point.
 - The conveyor belt isolation switch had not been switched off.

This was an avoidable life-changing accident of contract worker. It would not have happened if: the engineer had been adequately trained and supervised by his employer, an adequate risk assessment had been undertaken by the engineer and the site manager, and the site manager had ensured that the engineer was aware of site safety procedures for the conveyor belt system.

- *Visiting HGV driver seriously injured by forklift truck:*
 - Insufficient segregation between pedestrians and vehicles.
 - Inadequate system of work for deliveries.

This was an avoidable life-changing accident. It would not have happened if the site had: an effective system for segregating vehicles and pedestrians, an adequate system of work for handling deliveries, and the site manager had ensured that the HGV driver understood the site safety procedures for drivers of delivery vehicles.

- *Bedding manufacturer: two machinery guarding failures:*
 - Lack of machinery guarding on a large cutting machine and on a large quilting machine.
 - Inadequate system of work for coping with blockages on these machines.

Poor management systems could have resulted in a fatality or life changing injuries. The employer and site manager had not undertaken adequate risk assessments, there was no safe system of work and inadequate training at all levels.

- *Tipper truck fatality when employee was salvaging parts from an old tipper truck:*
 - The tipper was not secured with a prop or support.
 - There was no isolating system for the tipper's hydraulic system.
 - The firm's director was jailed.

This was an avoidable fatality. It would not have happened if: the tipper had been securely supported and if the tipper's hydraulic system had had an isolation system. The director was prosecuted due to gross negligence and disregard of workplace safety procedures.

- *Fractured skull after falling from indoor scaffolding:*
 - Fell into a basement area.
 - Lack of edge protection on scaffolding.
 - No guard rails.

This was an avoidable life-changing accident. It would not have happened if: the scaffolding had been provided with edge protection and guard rails, an adequate risk assessment had been undertaken, and everyone involved had received adequate working at height training.

- *Obstruction by company director:*
 - Company prosecuted for inadequate health and safety risk assessments and systems of work and site welfare provision.
 - The Company Director was obstructive and did not comply with *HSE* requirements.

Poor management systems could have resulted in a fatality or life changing injuries. The employer and site manager had not undertaken an adequate risk assessment, there was no safe system of work and inadequate training at all levels.

- *Granite worktop manufacturer: repeated health and safety breaches:*
 - 2019 non-compliance with enforcement notices.
 - 2021 defective machine guard and PUWER breaches.

Poor management systems could have resulted in a fatality or life changing injuries. The employer and site manager had not undertaken an adequate risk assessment, inadequate machinery guarding and maintenance, inadequate safe systems of work and inadequate training.

Members agreed that all these *HSE* case studies clearly demonstrated that adequate workplace risk assessments and safe systems of work made good business sense as well as ensuring that employees had a safe working environment.

Geoff Price thanked Steve for another comprehensive and helpful presentation that had generated some useful discussion on ways of developing effective workplace management systems. He presented him with a gift as a small token of members' appreciation.

Geoff then reminded members that their next joint meeting will be on 18 April 2024 when Graham Orr, Asbestos Consultant, *Orrion Asbestos Limited*, will discuss *Asbestos management: 'the does and don'ts'*

He then concluded the formal part of the meeting by encouraging members with to network one another and Steve over tea or coffee and biscuits.

Related UK Government and HSE web site links:

HSE Management Standards: [What are the Management Standards? - Stress - HSE](#)

Building Safety Regulator: [Building Safety Regulator - Building safety - HSE](#)

Protecting workers from welding fume: [Welding fume: protect your workers - Overview - HSE](#)

Metal working fluids: [About metalworking fluids - Metalworking fluids - HSE](#)

Woodworking: [Health and safety in the woodworking industry \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Managing workplace asbestos: [Asbestos - HSE](#)

Managing agricultural health and safety: [About health and safety in agriculture \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Managing construction health and safety: [Construction - HSE](#)

Workplace use of dichloromethane: [Dichloromethane \(DCM\) - COSHH e-tool - HSE](#)

Managing workplace noise: [HSE: Noise at work – health and safety in the workplace](#)

COSHH and bakers: [COSHH and bakers - key messages - COSHH \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Motor vehicle repair: [Motor vehicle repair \(MVR\) - HSE](#)

Improving health and safety standards in the plastics industry: [Plastics - HSE](#)

Managing potential legionella risks in workplace water systems: [Legionella and legionnaires' disease - HSE](#)