

Mental Health Awareness Week – 10th – 16th May 2021

Mark Rowland, chief Executive of Mental Health Foundation tells us “Why Nature”

In the first lockdown, I called an elderly friend. She lives alone and had recently had a fall. Separated from her community, she had lost all in-person contact. When I asked her how she had got through it, she told me it was taking daily comfort from watching the birds sing to each other on the fence and the flowers re-emerge from the frosts of winter.



During long months of the pandemic, millions of us turned to nature. Research showed going for walks outside was one of our top coping strategies and 45% reported being in green spaces had been vital for their mental health. Websites which showed footage from webcams of wildlife saw hits increase by over 2000%. Wider studies also found that during lockdowns, people not only spent more time in nature but were noticing it more. It was as if we were re-discovering at our most fragile point our fundamental human need to connect with nature.

Nature is so central to our psychological and emotional health, that it's almost impossible to realise good mental health for all without a greater connection to the natural world. For most of human history, we lived as part of nature. It is only in the last five generations that so many of us have lived and worked in a context that is largely separated from nature. And it is only since a 1960s study in the US found that patients who were treated in hospitals with a view of nature recovered faster, that science has started to unpack the extraordinary health benefits.

During [Mental Health Awareness Week 2021](#), we will pull together the evidence that demonstrates the powerful benefits of nature for our mental health. We will look at nature's unique ability to not only bring consolation in times of stress, but also increase our creativity, empathy and a sense of wonder. It turns out that it is not just being in nature but how we open ourselves up and interact with nature that counts. We will show that even small contacts with nature can reduce feelings of social isolation and be effective in protecting our mental health, and preventing distress. Nature is our great untapped resource for a mentally healthy future.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, we are asking you to do three things:

- Experience nature: take time to recognise and grow your connection with nature during the week. Take a moment to notice and celebrate nature in your daily life. You might be surprised by what you notice!
- Share nature: Take a photo, video or sound recording and share the connections you've made during the week, to inspire others. Join the discussion on how you're connecting with nature by using the hashtags #ConnectWithNature #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek
- Talk about nature: use our tips, school packs, research and policy guides to discuss in your family, school, workplace and community how you can help encourage people to find new ways to connect with nature in your local environment.

Launch of SCSLG Mental Health Common Intent

Mental ill health affects 1:4 people in the UK. The construction industry and allied occupational groups are recognised as a more vulnerable group with an increased incidence of suicide. This is attributed to many factors. Not least that it is male dominated sector; (Men are less likely to share their emotional and mental health needs with others and therefore, less likely to seek help from their GP or other health professionals).



Highways operatives often work long hours away from home, often in demanding physical environments, remote from their regular wellbeing outlets and disconnected from family and friend networks. These are just some of the factors contributing to poor mental health across the sector, which together we aim to improve with the guidance of this Common Intent Document.

Join us for this online event on Tuesday 11th May between 10:00 – 10:00 to hear more about the new Supply Chain Safety Leadership Groups, Mental Health Common Intent Document and toolkit and that was published in January 2021 and how it can help you and your teams to increase mental health awareness and support. Register via this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-sharing-the-journey-tickets-150875818635>

Driver Fined for Ignoring Red X

A driver must pay nearly £1,000 in fines and costs after they lost a battle to overturn a fixed penalty notice.

They were among nearly 300 drivers who were spotted travelling in closed lanes on the M25 in 2018 following a collision.

Police were dealing with a crash and diesel spillage on December 13 when they noticed drivers passing queuing traffic in two lanes that had



been marked on a motorway gantry with a red 'X', indicating the lanes were closed.

The Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire road policing unit said the signs were in place at junction 20 for Kings Langley to "protect workers carrying out urgent highway repairs".

Officers, parked in a lay-by, said they caught nearly 300 drivers disobeying the gantry signs in just under an hour.

The unit says the majority of drivers ignoring the signs were dealt with via an educational scheme or fixed penalty notice; the latter being a £100 fine and three points on their licence.

However, one driver took their case to the magistrates court - and lost - and were told to pay £420 after the magistrate took into account the officer's evidence and video evidence.

But the driver appealed this ruling and took their case to the crown court.

However, the unit revealed on Tuesday that the appeal had been dismissed by the judge, who issued three points on the defendant's license and told them to pay fines and costs amounting to nearly £1,000.

Following the outcome in court, the unit tweeted: "Please do not drive under a red 'X' displayed on a motorway gantry.

"They are set for the safety of everyone using and working on the road."

A Helping Hand

A helping hand

In 2020, 33 per cent of injuries sustained within our business units have involved hands, fingers and thumbs, resulting in a range of severity. Whilst this is a reduction on the 40 per cent figure the last time we reported, it shows we still have work to do.

Whilst concentration is understandably focused on our wider health, your hands and fingers are tools that cannot be replaced.

Please take the time to give colleagues 'A Helping Hand' by reminding them of the causes of hand, finger and thumb injuries. From life at home to working on site, every intervention may prevent a colleague injuring themselves in a similar way.



21 hand injuries
2 thumb injuries
30 finger injuries



1 Specified injury
1 RIDDOR (>7 days)
3 LTI (3-7 days)
5 LTI (1-3 days)
43 minor injuries



Almost all of these injuries could have been prevented and a significant underlying cause in almost all of the events is the poor risk perception of / habits displayed by the individuals involved, not anticipating the potential outcome of their actions. Given the manual nature of our industry, hands, fingers and thumbs are repeatedly one of the most injured parts of the body in construction.

How are you looking after your hands?

Everyone has the right to be
100% Safe

**MORGAN
SINDALL**
INFRASTRUCTURE

- 9 Manual handling
- 7 Trapped / caught in machinery
- 7 Using non-powered hand tools
- 7 Hitting / stepping on structure / objects
- 6 Hit by moving / flying objects

MASK-REFUSING DELIVERY DRIVER 'FAIRLY DISMISSED'

A lorry driver who was sacked after refusing to wear a facemask inside his cab on a client's site was fairly dismissed, a judge has ruled. The case is believed to be the first time a tribunal has ruled on facemask refusal.



The driver brought a claim for unfair dismissal against his employer after he was summarily dismissed in June 2020 over an incident at a Refinery site. The driver had refused to wear a face covering when asked, prompting the company to ban him from the site for breaching health and safety rules.

Finding in favour of his employer, Judge Barrett said that the driver had failed to comply with his employer's drivers' handbook, which stipulates that: 'customer instruction regarding PPE requirements must be followed'. It was therefore reasonable for his employer to fire him for misconduct.

The driver had been employed as a Class 1 lorry driver since 2016. The tribunal at East London Hearing Centre heard that around 90% of the depot's work involves driving to and from a Thames Refinery site.

The incident happened on the morning of 21 May 2020 when the driver visited the Refinery site. The tribunal was told that while the driver did wear a mask while outside his vehicle, he refused to wear one inside the cab when two managers asked him to do so. The first manager pointed out that 'with no mask on, all the droplets from his mouth as he spoke were going to land on people's faces due to his elevated position up in the cab'. But The driver argued that the cab was his own area. The refinery later contacted his employer to say they had banned The driver from the site for his failure to follow their rules.

The driver argued that wearing a face covering was not a legal requirement; that he was in his own environment in the cab of his lorry; and that face mask requirements were not recorded in The

refinery site rules, so he wasn't aware of the need to wear a mask inside his cab until he was approached by a manager.

The tribunal heard that the refinery site paperwork hadn't been amended to reflect the new rules because they were temporary measures taken in response to the pandemic, but that the refinery security personnel did advise visitors and provide masks, and there was a poster at the weighbridge.

Following an investigation and disciplinary hearing, the driver was dismissed without notice on 25 June 2020. The driver's refinery site ban was one factor, the tribunal heard, but more significant were his "deliberate refusal to comply with a health and safety instruction" and "lack of remorse" in standing by his actions.

Ruling that his employers' decision to fire The driver 'fell within the range of reasonable responses' to his conduct, Judge Barrett noted that 'The Drivers Handbook imposes an obligation to comply with PPE instructions at a client site [and on] the Claimant's own account, he had refused to comply with such an instruction.' Further, the driver 'continued insistence that he had done nothing wrong' caused his employer to lose confidence in his future conduct.

Commenting on the wider implications of the case for employers, Paul Grindley, employment partner at Winston Solicitors, told *IOSH magazine*: 'I think it would be reasonable to dismiss an employee who, without cause, refuses to wear a mask, as it is part of PPE and it would therefore be a breach of a health and safety requirement. It is, arguably, a refusal to carry out a reasonable and lawful request, which could amount to gross misconduct.

'Client or third-party pressure or influence is also relevant and provides the employer with another potentially fair reason to dismiss – namely 'some other substantial reason'.

'Beware, though, the employee who claims that their refusal is because of a medical condition, which may amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010: this is a veritable minefield.'

Source: IOSH Magazine

Near Miss Report – Lifting Pre-cast Units

During recent lifting operations issues have been identified with details provided with precast concrete units.

The Appointed Person for Lifting should review all information provided by the supplier to ensure lifting arrangements are suitable and record these on the lift plan.

Slinger/signallers should work to the requirements of the lift plan and report any discrepancies to the crane supervisor.



Precast headwall sections were procured for installation into the works. The units were supplied with lifting points installed during manufacture. Although the units were successfully unloaded on delivery, when lifting at the later stage a unit had only just cleared the ground when it rolled over and fell onto the wing wall. Exclusion zones were in place, no injuries and no damage to plant.

A subsequent review of the lifting arrangements provided by the supplier shows that the centre of gravity for this lift is very close to one of the sides of the triangle formed by the three lifting points.

Any deviation in the slinging arrangement or possibly the slewing movement of the lifting equipment could move the CoG sufficiently to allow the load to topple.

Precast culvert units were supplied to site.

The Appointed Person for Lifting (APL) prepared a lift plan for installation of units, calculating the weights at 4.8t and sizing equipment and accessories to suit.

During a site tour, the APL noticed the manufacturers product label on the unit stated a weight of 2.9t. The manufacturer later confirmed 4.8t is correct.

Although no actual incident occurred, it is conceivable that a slinger-signaller might see this label and select lifting accessories too small for this load.



Both precast unit suppliers have been made aware of these incidents and are addressing their issues internally to prevent future reoccurrence.

All APLs and those involved with lifting of any precast units should satisfy themselves that the details provided with the products are suitable and correct and ensure all slinging arrangements are clearly defined on the associated lift plan.

Source: Bam

Raising the Bar Checklist

This will help check compliance with the guidance by highlighting significant elements. A link is posted below that will direct you to the Highways Safety Hub website where there are also a lot of interesting items. Also consider joining the Twitter group which gives out lots of useful information regarding changes and uploads including the latest safety alerts.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-and-safety-for-major-road-schemes-raising-the-bar-initiative>