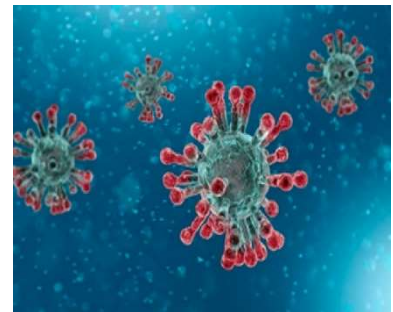


Highways Safety Hub Team Briefing

March 2020

Coronavirus - Build UK and the Construction Leadership Council have produced Site Operating Procedures

“These are exceptional circumstances and the industry must comply with the latest government advice on coronavirus at all times,” the Build UK document says.



Among the key points are:

- Site workers should always work two metres apart from each other, as per government instructions, including in the canteen / welfare facilities. In fact, it is recommended to close canteens that serve food and get people to bring their own prepared lunches in.
- Start times on site should be staggered to avoid congestion at the gates.
- All site workers are urged to drive or cycle to work and avoid public transport, if possible.
- Fingerprint scanners and other security systems that require touching should be disabled.
- Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible.
- Re-usable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use and not shared between workers. Single use PPE should be disposed of so that it cannot be reused.
- Stairs should be used in preference to lifts or hoists.
- Beyond this, a lot of cleaning and spraying is called for, with an abundance of hand sanitisers everywhere.

- Enhanced cleaning procedures should be in place across the site, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including:
 - Taps and washing facilities
 - Toilet flush and seats
 - Door handles and push plates
 - Hand rails on staircases and corridors
 - Lift and hoist controls
 - Machinery and equipment controls
 - Food preparation and eating surfaces
 - Telephone equipment
 - Key boards, photocopiers and other office equipment.

The guide says: “The health and safety requirements of any construction activity must also not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place.”

It further adds that if a site is not consistently implementing the measures set out here, it needs to seriously consider shutting down.

The full document can be downloaded from <https://t.co/k2tmJ9k3PN>

The message from Highways England is as follows.

‘Our direction and guiding principles have not changed. From a supply base perspective, we remain focused on safely maintaining our critical services at all times and minimising the impact on our staff, our customers and our supply chain. We must ensure that we support the movement of critical workers and freight at all times in support of the country’s efforts. We are continuing to operate in a business as usual way and plan on doing this for the foreseeable future.’

Highways England have set up a specific email enquiry line for anyone who feels they need further information. The email address is Corona.Information@highwaysengland.co.uk

Raising the Bar Checklist, updated in Jan 2020

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

Also consider joining the Twitter group which gives out lots of useful information regarding changes and uploads including the latest safety alerts.

https://twitter.com/highwayssafety2?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

Find your way to positive wellbeing in 2020



Try something new – taking up a new hobby or project can really help boost your confidence, give a sense of accomplishment and encourage new skills.

Build great relationships – this helps you build a sense of belonging and self-worth, share positive experiences

Get active – whether it's a run, walk, yoga, spin class or any other form of physical activity, your mind and body will thank you for it.

Be present – pay more attention to your thoughts, feelings, body and the environment around you. Practising mindfulness for just 10 minutes a day helps you become more relaxed, aware and engaged.

Take action and get happy! – Action for Happiness have provided a useful list containing actions you may wish to explore. They also provide a monthly 'Kindness Calendar' which is great for sharing with friends, family and work colleagues. Each month has a theme and actions, whether it's volunteering, finding three good things every day, or creating a local support group.

Have a look and get involved and help spread some happiness!

Top 5 Risks in Construction

It's estimated that one in 10 construction workers are injured on site every year, and it's for this reason we need to recall some of their common risks and hazards.

1. Falls from height

Falls from height are the biggest cause of fatal injuries at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) statistics show that 40 workers were killed as a result of a fall from height in 2018/19.

Since work at height is carried out every day within the construction industry, this is a daily risk that workers must be prepared for.

Examples of work at height include:

- working on a roof
- using vertical ladders
- working on a wind turbine
- working on below-level walkways.

The Working at Height Regulations 2005 state that work at height should be avoided, if possible. If it cannot be avoided, then it is the responsibility of the site manager to ensure all work is planned, organised, risk assessed, controlled, supervised and carried out with a safe system of work. Equipment should also be checked to ensure it is competent, and employees should have the required training and knowledge to undertake the work safely.

On a construction site, work at height can take place in many different forms, all of which carry their own risks. For example, when working on a roof, it is important the rigidity of the roofing material is considered. If deemed fragile, specific controls will need to be put in place to prevent accidents.

2. Slips, trips and falls

In 2018/19, slips, trips and falls on the same level accounted for 29 per cent of non-fatal injuries within the construction industry. This just shows that slips, trips and falls are the single biggest cause of non-fatal injury. Making small changes can vastly reduce the number of injuries incurred on site.

Causes of slips, trips and falls are:

- wet and slippery surfaces
- slick spots
- clutter and strewn materials
- uneven surfaces
- obstruent debris.

To combat this, workers are required to wear suitable footwear with maximal grip. Also, any wet or slippery surfaces should be well signposted with a slippery floor warning sign. The construction site must be clutter-free and with equipment, tools and building materials in good order. If working areas are not kept tidy, there is more of a chance of someone being injured by tripping over.

3. Hearing problems

Not only in the construction industry but also in everyday life, overexposure to loud noises can lead to hearing problems. However, this is a major risk within the construction working environment, with an estimated 21,000 construction workers in the UK suffering from work-related hearing problems and 55 claims of work-related deafness in 2018.

Sources of hearing problems are:

- power tools and groundwork equipment
- loud machinery
- supply vehicles.



Around 21,000 construction workers in the UK suffer from work-related hearing problems

When working with loud equipment, employees are required to wear hearing protection. This consists of a set of soundproof headphones, which will reduce the intensity of sound waves entering the ears and therefore reduce the risk of developing hearing problems.

4. Back injuries

Moving heavy objects without adequate training can cause severe back injuries, which can lead to permanent damage. When moving objects, it is important to bend the legs and lift heavy items using the leg muscles rather than bending the back. Lifting incorrectly is the way most back injuries are incurred. It is a legal requirement for employees to ensure manual handling health and safety training is available to all employees who are required to do any heavy lifting.

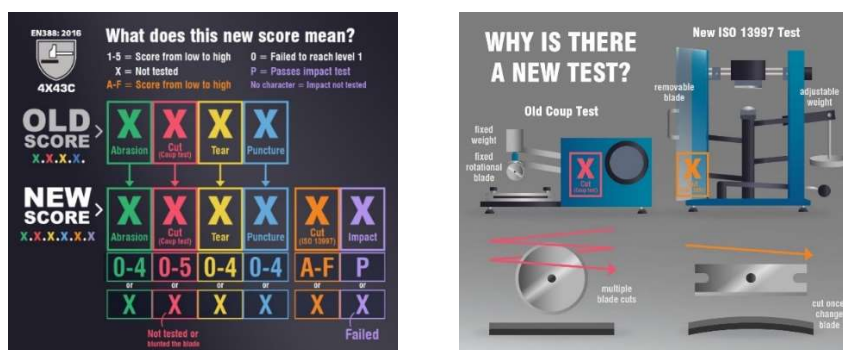
5. Falling objects

With most construction work involving multi-storey buildings, there is a degree of risk that someone working above may drop a tool or object resulting in someone below being hit. Workers are required to carry tools on a lanyard to reduce the risk of dropping things on people working or walking below.



The new score system for gloves.....and what you need to know...

The standard for protective gloves for abrasion, cut, tear and puncture (EN 388:2003) was updated to EN388:2016 and now incorporates a more accurate test for cut protection as well as a few other small changes. This new score update affects cut level standards and other levels of testing. Many gloves may now have new scores on them, for example a glove that used to be marked as 4.5.4.3. is now marked as 4.X.4.3.C



The previous EN388:2003 glove score was a 4-digit number with a maximum score of 4544. The second digit in this number is the cut score, with 1 being the minimum and 5 scoring the highest. The addition of the new letter is due to inconsistencies in the old cut test when a blade was blunted by the test sample, as this was deemed to no longer give an accurate cut protection level for gloves that blunt the test blade. The old test (Coupe test) (now clause 6.2 in EN388:2016) used a rotary blade which ran over the glove with 5N (Newtons) of force. This was acceptable for gloves that did not blunt the rotary blade however it did not give accurate score ratings for gloves that blunted the blade.

The new test (ISO 13997) (now clause 6.3 in EN388:2016) is designed to give a more accurate result and allows for the recognition of higher degrees of cut resistance. It achieves this by changing the blade after every cut and using variable levels of force (N) applied to the blade rather than just the 5N in the old test. The cut score on the new test uses letters rather than numbers. The new levels go from A to F, with A being the lowest level of protection and F scoring the highest.

The marking on the glove will appear as EN388 4.X.4.4.F (X meaning not tested to the old test or blade was blunted during testing and testing was stopped before completion).

Unfortunately as this is a completely new test there is no accurate correlation as to what "new" score an "old" glove will get.

As yet there is no definitive wording on the 6 levels but they are expected to be:

- *Level A - Low Cut level*
- *Level B - Low/Medium Cut level*
- *Level C - Medium/High Cut level*
- *Level D - High Cut level*
- *Level E - Very High Cut level*
- *Level F - Ultra High Cut level*

I-Tip handles can reduce musculoskeletal injuries

Around 2.3% of workers in the sector reported suffering from musculoskeletal disorder they believed was work-related (new or long-standing cases). This rate is statistically significantly higher than the rate for workers across all industries (1.2%).

Cases of musculoskeletal disorders account for a higher proportion of ill health cases in construction than in all industries (44%).

An area that has long been missed is employees involved in the moving and handling of goods. They could be injured at any time from repetition of the task, even for light loads.

Health and Safety professionals always apply the hierarchy of control when assessing risks. Often the solution for a manual handling task is to reduce the risk of injury by introducing wheelbarrows, trolleys or sack trucks into our task design.

However, this introduces new ergonomic risks in the form of:

- Fixed handles with no flexibility of movement.
- Difficult grip in a fixed position.
- Need to change grip for the final movement of tipping the load – creating jarring action.

Key Benefits:

The measured reductions in the wrist angles when using the sack barrow and wheelbarrow will, in the long term, decrease the risk of musculoskeletal symptoms and disorders developing in the wrist.



Eliminating the need to take one or both hands off the wheelbarrow during tipping increases the safety of emptying wheelbarrows.

This process of taking one or both hands off the barrow decreases control of the barrow and increases the risk of it being dropped, with potentially serious consequences if the contents are heavy and/or hazardous. It can be concluded that use of iTip handles increases the safety of emptying wheelbarrows in this manner.

More information available at: <https://itiphandles.com/pages/health-and-safety>

Lost Loads Working Group

Lost loads incidents are still happening, and these can have major consequences as they can cause accidents and incidents as well as leading to prosecution.

Overloading of LCV's has been an on-going issue within the industry for several years particularly with users of 3.5 tonne vehicles. This can be largely attributed to the culture of "The Van" becoming the toolbox on wheels carrying tools and equipment for every eventuality combined with the commercial forces requiring teams to travel further with fewer support teams and become "One Stop Shops".

What are we doing to eliminate these?

A lost load working group led by the M6 J2-4 SMP Project was set up and they have recently held their third successful meeting with members of the Highways England supply chain, Highways England and the Police in attendance.

The group are currently working on:

- The selection of vehicles – are they suitable and which types should we use?
- HGV and load management systems
- Driver competency checking – what are we doing now and what should we be doing?
- Training in securing loads i.e. ratchet strapping
- What best practice is currently being used and sharing this around the industry

In addition, the group are also looking at vehicle weight issues as there have been recent prosecutions due to overloaded vehicles.

The M6 J2-4 SMP Project introduced a vehicle checking and weigh station which has proved extremely valuable as the number of vehicles now going onto the carriageway overloaded has reduced. There has also been a reduction in the number of vehicles being turned back and drivers becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities when loading and driving. This initiative has now been introduced on several other SMP projects with the same success.



Government Publishes Smart Motorway Findings

The development and implementation of smart motorways will continue but there 18 key recommendations for the future including abolishing dynamic hard shoulders, increasing the deployment of Stopped Vehicle Detection and an immediate review of emergency refuge provision.

The move comes as part of the DfT's Smart Motorway Safety Review, which has been published today. Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, has set out the 18-point package of measures to improve safety and public confidence, including a £5million programme to communicate with the general public.

The 'action-plan' is to ensure smart motorways are as safe as possible and work will focus on getting help to broken down drivers much quicker and making the schemes less confusing. This follows analysis commissioned by the Transport Secretary which found that overall, evidence shows that in most ways smart motorways are as safe as, or safer than, conventional ones.

Data shows that the risks that are lower on smart motorways compared with conventional motorways include tailgating, rapid changes of vehicle speeds, vehicles drifting off the carriageway and vehicles being driven too fast. However, some risks are higher than on conventional motorways, for example the risk of a collision between a moving and stationary vehicle.



In a statement, Grant Shapps said: "Following concerns about smart motorway safety, I asked my department to review the evidence and, if needed, bring forward recommendations. Today (12 March 2020) I am publishing that work and taking the action necessary to ensure our roads are as safe as they can be.

Full article can be found on the Safer Highways Blog at <https://www.saferhighways.co.uk>

Recent Safety Alerts Issued

- hei144 Concrete burn incident
- hei146 Managing incidents involving alternative fuelled vehicles
- hei147 Cabinet 600 mk6 electrical hazard
- hei148 Scaffold exclusion
- hei149 Excavator injury

These alerts can be found at www.highwayssafetyhub.com

Safety alerts etc. index listing

Introduction

- A database of SHEQ alerts, bulletins, learning, best practice, guidance and other docs, etc., has been produced onto an Excel File, providing links to each document (internet connection required).
- Although containing messages that cover S, H, E and Q topics, for ease of reference the database is referred to hereafter as a **“Safety alerts etc. index listing”**.
- The safety alerts etc. index listing, contains enough of a resource sample for users to access key learning on many and varied SHEQ topics.
- The 3rd issue, dated 29 Feb 2020, contains 1,707 entries.

Purpose

- The safety alerts etc. index listing is aimed at providing a reference library (database) for alerts, bulletins, learning, best practice, guidance and other docs etc., and by producing it onto Excel File, with an ability to search for entries of a similar type, including by date (year / month), work task, incident, outcome or subject matter, and originator / originator references.

How to access

- The latest “Safety alerts etc. index listing”, has been posted on the Highways safety hub web site, nested in the alerts tab page; <http://www.highwayssafetyhub.com/all-alerts-database.html>
- It can be used by opening the Excel File copy held on the web site, or by opening after saving a copy onto your own PC.
- To access individual documents from the links in column “G”, users will need internet access – All documents have been uploaded onto the index listing from a Google Drive account.

How it works

- Open the Excel File and go to the “Index listing” Tab page. When 1st used, the Excel File will open on this Tab page.
- By using the filter keys across the top line, topics can be selected by using one or a multiple of filters contained for columns “a to m” inclusive.
- Then just click on the link available in column “G” to open each required document.
- Please remember: To access individual documents, users will need internet access.

Future updates

- The “Safety alerts etc. index listing” is to be updated periodically, with subsequent revisions posted onto the Highways safety hub web site, at which time the previous version will be removed.
- The task of sourcing information from historic events and learning etc. is effectively complete, with only recent / new alerts and messages etc. to be included in future issues.