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Health and Safety Bulletin

Articles in this newsletter:

Useful contacts:

HSE website
www:hse.gov.uk

HSE Books:
PO Box 1999
Sudbury
Suffolk
CO10 2WA
Tel: 01787 881165

Environment Agency website:
www.environment–agency.gov.uk

Musculoskeletal Disorders – are we winning?

Although musculoskeletal disorder (MSDs) injuries result in about a third of RIDDOR reportable health problems, the number of MSD reportable incidents has recently fallen, but only in line with the overall reduction in RIDDOR reporting. However, this is also complicated by the fact that many MSD injuries are reported in the lost time accident category of RIDDOR – and since the HSE increased the trigger for reporting lost time accidents from three days to seven days in 2012, this has also affected the statistics.

What is the most effective strategy for reducing risk?
Ever since the introduction of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHOR) in 1992, employers have been required to identify their significant manual handling risks, eliminate them where possible and where that is not practicable, assess the risk factors associated with the manual handling activity to identify what further action can be taken to reduce the risk.

As well as the manual handling assessment guidance provided in the Approved Code of Practise and Guidance accompanying MHOR, the HSE has developed other forms of manual handling assessment:-

MAC (Manual handling Assessment Charts): This does not produce an assessment meeting regulatory requirements, but can be used as a filter to identify those tasks with the highest risk which need to be prioritised for further action. MAC score sheets are available for lifting, carrying and team handling and the HSE has provided some online training so that assessors can become familiar with using each assessment and compare their scores for videoed tasks with those agreed by experts. The MAC assessments are available at http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/index.htm
ART (Assessment of Repetitive Tasks): This assessment format was developed to help organisations that recognised that some of their tasks created the risk of Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs). These tend to be tasks which are not only repetitive but also involve the use of an awkward grip or a non-neutral upper body posture which can, over the long-term, result in disabling injuries. The HSE has provided a training package for the use of ART on their website at http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/uld/art/learning.htm
VMAC (Variable Manual handling Assessment Charts) – this form of assessment was developed for activities such as picking and packing or trailer loading, where the activity is repetitive, but the loads workers handle vary. For each task (e.g. order/activity), details of the load weights and distance carried are collected (preferably from three different people carrying out the work). This information is entered in a spreadsheet (downloaded from the HSE website at http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/vmac/5-entering-data.htm). The data can be used to assess the risk on a MAC chart (there are different MAC charts for different length of working shift) and is summarised on a table – this identifies which of the tasks are highest risk and therefore highest priority for risk reduction. The VMAC system is available at http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/mac/vmac/index.htm

Conclusion
There are a variety of manual handling assessment tools available from the HSE – and this is set to increase before the end of 2015, when the new assessment for pushing and pulling activities will be published (called RAPP).

Considering the length of time specific legislation for managing MSD risks has existed, the efforts the HSE has invested in developing assessment material to help employers reduce the risk, and the fact that MSDs still account for a high proportion of RIDDOR reportable accidents, it is not surprising that MSDs remain a priority in most HSE Sectors – and that if you have a visit from the HSE, this is likely to be one of the topics you discuss.

Recently issued health and safety information:

- HSG230: Keeping electrical switchgear safe http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg230.pdf
- HSR25 The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 Guidance on Regulations http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsr25.pdf
- HSG176 Storage of flammable liquids in tanks http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg176.pdf
- HSG51 Storage of flammable liquids in containers http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg51.pdf
- HSG140 Safe use and handling of flammable liquids http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg140.pdf
- How to safely remove disposable gloves poster http://www.globus.co.uk/assets/files/How-To-Safely-Remove-Your-Disposable-Gloves-A4-0615.pdf

HSL GRIP Ratings updated

The Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) has published their latest GRIP test results (at http://www.hsl.gov.uk/products/grip/grip-ratings) , providing information on the slip resistance of safety footwear. Although footwear can be tested again a BS EN standard for slip resistance, there are concerns that this does not replicate normal walking activities or the conditions under which slips occur. HSL has developed a ramp test, which it claims, provides a closer correlation between the slip resistance measured in laboratory condition and the workplace environment.

Depending on the slip risks associated with the workplace, employers can use the ratings to select the footwear suitable for their environment.

Case Law update

This issue focuses on cases associated with the MSDs

A microbrewery was successfully prosecuted and fined **£6,000** and with **£8,623** costs for failing to take sufficient action to prevent unsafe work at height and improve manual handling. The manual handling risks focused on the filling of hoppers with malt and barley, which involved employees lifting heavy sacks weighing up to 25kg in awkward circumstances. Initially the company was served with an Improvement Notice to carry out a thorough assessment of the handling risks and to take appropriate action, but when the HSE revisited, little had changed, so the organisation was prosecuted.

During the course of an investigation into an incident where an employee had been injured by a 50kg sack of rice falling onto the back of his neck, the HSE found that large consignments of 50kg sacks of basmati rice were routinely being manually offloaded from containers without the use of any mechanical aids. The investigation highlighted ongoing activities that posed a risk of musculoskeletal injury to employees, and that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment had not been carried out. In a typical six-month period, 1,700 tonnes of rice had been delivered that required manually offloading; therefore this was not an isolated incident. The employer was fined **£25,000** with **£28,000** costs.

A hi-tech manufacturer was fined **£22,000** and ordered to pay **£604** costs after two workers were injured in separate incidents in the space of six weeks. One of the accidents involved a two-man team attempting to lift a 70-90kg reel of synthetic plastic material. One of the workers lost their grip on the reel causing it fall and trap his co-worker's hand against the surface of a wrapping table – this resulted in his finger pad being partially severed and required reconstruction of his fingertip and nail-bed. In their investigation, the HSE found the incident resulted from the employer's failure to adequately risk assess operations, issue safe working procedures, and to ensure that employees were not exposed to unacceptably high levels of risk.

A trainee furnace man received **£8,000** in compensation after he suffered two back strains. His job involved carrying 40 heavy bags of graphite per shift, and the first accident occurred on his 13th consecutive day of working, just as he was due to take a four-day break. When he returned to work a few days later, he was put back into the same job, and 15 days after his original accident, he was instructed to use a jack hammer above head height. The heavy tool reportedly caused him to suffer a second strain injury and the worker was forced to take three months off work as a result. He was on a rolling 12-week contract with the employer and he was soon told his contract would not be renewed. The employer settled the claim out of court.

Public NEBOSH General Certificate course

Clwyd Associates are running a public course in Coalville. Why should you complete your certificate training with us?

- Our pass rate is over 93% - well above the national average
- The lead tutor is a chemical engineer and CMIOSH with over 15 years industrial experience and also a qualified adult trainer
- The course is highly interactive and includes group exercises, practice examination questions and mock examinations
- It takes place a at quiet venue, easy to get to from the M1 or A42 with free parking
- Course fees cover the training, course book and handouts, light refreshments and NEBOSH examination fees

NGC1 - 11th-15th January 2016 **NGC2 -** 1st-5th February 2016
Exams – 2nd March 2016

Clwyd Associates

We are a small management consultancy based in the Midlands.

We only employ consultants and associates with at least 15 years practical experience backed up by recognised professional and academic qualifications - ensuring our clients receive first class service tailored to their needs.

Clwyd Associates Ltd
www.clwydassociates.co.uk

Orton House
Overton Close
Leicestershire
LE67 8FY

PHONE/FAX:
01530 837477

E-MAIL:
enquiries@clwydassociates.co.uk