

Health and Safety six monthly report for 7 November 2012

This report provides an update on the work carried by the Health and Safety Team for April to October 2012. It is not an exhaustive list but identifies some key activities.

Investigations

91 accidents have been reported to the team over this period all of which have required consideration.

This compares to 131 RIDDOR notifications for the same period in 2011 (albeit to the end of October). We would suggest that the main reason for the fall in numbers of RIDDOR reports (other than the fact that under-reporting by businesses under RIDDOR is notorious - to the extent that it is estimated that up to 50% of notifiable incidents under RIDDOR go unreported by businesses) is the change in the reporting requirements which came into effect in April 2012 - businesses are no longer required to report "over 3 day" incidents, only over 7 day incidents (i.e. where the employee has been off work or unable to carry out their normal duties for a period of 7 or more days). The higher threshold for reporting incidents enables us to focus on the more serious incidents which warrant further investigation.

Notices

There have been 5 Prohibition Notices and 3 Improvement Notices issued since April 2012.

PROJECTS

(See attached table)

Lasers

Since October 2010, the requirement to register Class 3B and 4 lasers with the Care Quality Commission (except for in surgical situations) ceased. As a result, laser, Intense Light Systems (ILS) and Intense Pulse Light (IPL) treatments in hair and beauty salons, non-NHS private clinics and other cosmetic establishments will fall into the remit of Local Authority enforcement under the above mentioned legislation. As such, the Public Protection team identified premises offering treatments commercially within the district and initiated a project to assess the business' compliance in line with the guidance issued by the Department of Health and the relevant health and safety legislation.

In total 5 established premises were inspected and any non-compliance noted at the time of the visits have now been addressed. The use of laser equipment is considered high risk in that it can cause serious personal injury if the treatment is incorrectly applied or if a faulty equipment is used. As the health and safety team now hold a database of operators, they will be inspecting premises at an appropriate frequency. Moreover, the team will be

seeking to approach businesses/ operators reported to the Council offering treatment without prior consent from the Council.

Electrical Safety

Historical knowledge from Council officers indicated that a significant number of businesses were situated in buildings where the proprietor was unaware of the safety of the electrical installation. As such the Council decided to carry out a project to identify unsafe electrical installations.

The purpose of the project was to help ensure the following:

- The preliminary identification of possible electrical defects which could give rise to personal danger, or risk to property;
- Where suspect electrics were found, action was taken to ensure the electrical system was safe.
- Increase awareness amongst businesses as to the importance of maintaining a safe electrical system.

Fifty food businesses were visited to check the electrical safety of the installation. Officers visited a variety of small to medium sized predominantly independent businesses. In accordance with a written safe system of work and guidelines, officers discussed the electrical history with the manager/owner, carried out visual safety checks, and used Martindale professional socket testers on electrical sockets and electrical extensions.

From the fifty premises checked, 7 premises (14%) were found to have defective electrics. In all but one case where the business was subject to enforcement action, the business willingly took immediate action to rectify the matter.

Asbestos

Central Bedfordshire Council is the lead authority as part of an asbestos safety project covering thousands of commercial premises across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Asbestosis is the single greatest cause of work-related deaths in the UK. When these fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4500 deaths a year. Asbestos was extensively used as a building material in the UK from the 1950s through to the mid-1980s. It was used for a variety of purposes and was ideal for fireproofing and insulation.

This project is being carried out over an 18 month period commencing October 2012 where council Public Protection Officers will be visiting 116 businesses in Leighton Buzzard, advising them about their legal requirements in identifying asbestos, and checking they have measures in place to ensure asbestos within the building is managed so that it does not present a risk to health.

Businesses failing to work with the Council will be subject to enforcement action via service of statutory notices.

Torch Relay – One officer was effectively seconded to the Torch Relay Task Group for a period of around 12 weeks. I was responsible for planning and devising, organising and implementing the Crowd safety Management plan for the event.

Safety Advisory Group

The SAG has been involved in scrutinising the Council's event safety management plan for the Olympic Torch Relay. The SAG were also involved in detailed and protected discussions with the event organisers of the Godiva Awakes project to ensure that this went off without any significant impact or incidents as it travelled across our district. There was some negative publicity over the way that the event was handled by Hertfordshire Police when the event moved into their district. I am currently working on a H&S project which links to the SAG promoting best practice in planning and organising public firework events in Central Bedfordshire. Town & Parish Councils have been contacted, and a press release issued to promote this further, and I am in contact with various event organisers to provide them with further information, advice and guidance in this respect.

Other work

There continues to be regular requests from individuals and businesses wanting to be registered to carry out body piercing and/or tattooing following the upward trend in these types of businesses.

The Service carried out a highly successful two day **Zoo seminar** for local authority zoo licensing officers with zoo licensing experts as speakers. Central Bedfordshire Council has four zoos staff so the training was invaluable in what is a complex area our staff were also able to share their experiences and learn from the 80 colleagues who attended from across the country.

The **Estates Excellence** Project has recently been launched at Woodside Industrial Estate at an event attended by the Mayor of Dunstable, Cllr Dalgarno and the 16 partners including Central Bedfordshire Council, the Fire Service, the Police, the Health Service, the HSE and local businesses. The project involves partners visiting businesses and carrying out an assessment of how well they manage health and safety in their work place. They are then invited to free, short, focussed training sessions covering areas where they need help. The training is delivered by experts from regulators and businesses and is to be delivered on the estate so they won't have to travel.

Animal Licensing

A review of licence fees in this area has been completed and revised fees agreed and introduced, these reflect the costs incurred by the Council in the licensing process.

For further details please contact Jo Borthwick on 0300 300 6170 (x76170)

