

Health and Safety six monthly report for 8 May 2013

This report provides an update on the work carried by the Health and Safety Team for October 2012 to April 2013. It is not an exhaustive list but identifies some key activities.

Investigations

A total of 87 accidents have been reported to the team over this period all of which have required consideration including an amputation of a thumb, numerous slipping incidents leading to serious back injuries as well as manual handling injuries leading to long periods of absence from work. Headline accident data for this period is set out in the attached Appendix, but includes:

- The highest sector for accidents in this period was the retail sector, with the Warehouse and Leisure sectors also contributing a significant proportion.
- Accidents to members of the public accounted for nearly 50% of reported incidents, with over 7 day injuries to employees the other main type of incidents reported.
- Fractures, lacerations, strains and other (non-specific) types of injuries were the main types of injuries reported in roughly equal numbers.
- Slips and trips was significantly the highest reported initial cause of reported incidents, almost 3 times as many as the next highest cause (lifting and handling). It should be remembered that this is the initial accident cause as reported by the employer when completing the RIDDOR incident report, and does not reflect the underlying causal factors that may be identified once an investigation has been carried out. Investigations can often reveal that these are frequently linked to failures in safety management systems.

Where accident investigations were carried out, contraventions of law were found in each case. Due to the current economic climate and changes within the regulatory enforcement regime, businesses were provided with more support and advice to achieve the desired outcome. Whilst this was welcomed by businesses, this approach did result in a significant increase in the time spent by officers.

Notices

There have been 12 Prohibition Notices and 16 Improvement Notices issued since April 2012.

PROJECTS

(See attached table)

Asbestos

16 business premises were approached regarding their compliance with asbestos regulations. 15 businesses had not completed any asbestos survey. Following a graduated approach in getting the businesses to comply with their asbestos duty to manage obligations, all but three remaining businesses have had surveys carried out. Please note asbestos management information was provided to each business which enabled them to have asbestos surveys completed at no cost. Efforts are underway in getting the remaining 3 businesses to comply with out having to resort to legal proceedings.

Legionella

A mapping exercise has been carried to identify any cooling towers and evaporative condensers within the district, as premises that have these installations have been identified as presenting a higher risk as a potential source of legionella. Premises with hot and cold water systems and spa pools have been identified as carrying a medium risk. This is a national joint HSE/Local Authority intervention project. An HSE briefing for the project is being delivered this month and then inspections of relevant premises will commence.

Business Training

Sessions for training on risk assessments for small and medium businesses have been booked and invitations sent out.

Skin piercing

Central Bedfordshire Council is the enforcing authority for businesses carrying out skin piercing which involves the following activities:

- Electrolysis
- Acupuncture
- Semi-permanent make-up
- Tattooing
- Piercing of the body including ears, nose, eyebrow, tongue, belly button, nipples, and other body parts. Currently there is no genital piercing.

Over the past 3 years there have been numerous ad-hoc reports from a variety of sources alleging people have been setting up skin piercing businesses within their own home unregistered. Skin piercing with the appropriate safety inspections present risks to the public, notably physical injury from piercing incorrectly, infections, or communicable disease i.e. hepatitis.

During the months of January to March 2013, Public Protection undertook a project to check skin piercers in Central Bedfordshire to ensure they were properly registered and practising skin piercing in a safe manner. A total of 42 businesses were visited for safety and other checks to be undertaken

Approximately 50% of businesses were **not** displaying a valid premises registration and approximately 60% of practising individuals were found **not** to be displaying a valid person skin piercing registration

29 individuals were found to be skin piercing without a valid registration. Formal requests were made for these individuals to either stop skin piercing forthwith or apply for registration and demonstrate their training and competence. 16 individuals chose to stop, with the remaining 13 individuals applying for registration. During this time two Prohibition Notices were served to stop individuals practising skin piercing where it was suspected they would continue illegally.

Business premises found to be unregistered also either stopped skin piercing or applied for registration; this resulted in 6 businesses applying for registration. .

The Council collected a total of £2750 in application fees.

Safety Advisory Group

The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) continues to be very busy with more and more events coming to the multi- agency group for advice on running their events safely. Since January, over 35 public events happening in 2013 have been engaged with in a range of ways:

- Provision of best practice advice and information both verbally and in writing regarding event safety management as applicable to their specific event.
- Event site visits to provide more detailed advice on event safety matters relating to their event.
- Attendance by the event organisers at a SAG Multi-agency meeting to discuss their event arrangements in detail, with advice on best practice and specific event safety requirements being identified.

The SAG has developed a workplan for 2013 which includes reviewing public safety at sports grounds within Central Bedfordshire.

Other work

Central Bedfordshire Council hosted a *Work Related Death Protocol* training session for other regulators from Herts and Beds. The training was delivered using high profile guest speakers from the HSE, Bedfordshire Coroners Office and the Major Crime Unit as well as EHO's case presenting their case studies. The aim of the training was to train regulators how to deal with the eventuality of dealing workplace fatality notifications.

The team also undertook a *Cryptosporidium* outbreak investigation in conjunction with the Health Protection Agency at Shuttleworth College. A total of 4 cases were confirmed with the college as the identified source of infection. Officers from the team carried out a number of investigation visits

and worked closely with College senior management to identify appropriate infection control measures that needed to be implemented to prevent a an expansion or recurrence of the outbreak.

The work of the team has also been recognised outside of the district as examples of good practice in both health and safety and public health. They were recently asked to give presentations on the methodology and public health significance of the Sun beds Project (a joint project in conjunction with Trading Standards) that was completed in 2012, to the local CIEH branch and also a Herts & Beds Public Health Forum. They have received enquiries from other local authorities looking to set up their own similar projects on how the project was undertaken.

Estates Excellence Project

This work involved visits to 159 businesses by the partners to the project and with 34 follow up visits to give more detailed advice. The training events were held in November covering a broad range of Health and Safety topics and there were 134 attendees. Following the success of the project our Local MEP, Geoffrey van Orden visited and met with business who had been involved with the project.

Animal Licensing

An informal Zoo licence inspection was undertaken at Whipsnade Zoo in March 2013.

Annual renewals for Animal Boarding Establishments (including home boarders), pet shops and dog breeders licences have been issued to some 56 premises most of which have required a visit from the team to ensure licence conditions are being met.

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