

Health and Safety six monthly report for 13 November 2013

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

Investigations

In total there have been 89 accidents reported to us over the past six months all of which have been responded to by the service.

The team is currently investigating a serious complaint concerning a business that may have breached their duty to manage asbestos at their premises. As a result employees could have been exposed to risks of inhalation of asbestos fibres.

We are also currently investigating four accidents, all of them involving major injuries, and all relating to participants taking part in the Warrior Adrenaline Race which took place on Dunstable Downs in April and September of this year.

Notices

There have been four Prohibition Notices and five Improvement Notices issued since April 2013.

PROJECTS

(See attached table)

Asbestos

Since the last update, a further 37 businesses were approached regarding compliance with the asbestos regulations. There continues to be a high non compliance rate with approximately 80% found to not to be complying with asbestos legislation and as such putting staff, contractors and others at risk of ill health. Officers have been working with businesses to help achieve compliance. Where businesses have failed to cooperate, Improvement Notices have been served to achieve compliance.

Legionella

As a result of the mapping exercise carried out over the spring and summer, we have been able to update our register of business premises with Cooling

Towers or Evaporative Condensers. This has allowed us to eliminate a lot of historic but inaccurate details on our database. We now have only five premises with notifiable devices (i.e. cooling towers or evaporative condensers) on our register. Three of these are Health and Safety Executive enforced premises and only one of the Local Authority enforced premises has an active cooling tower on site. The premises falling under the Councils enforcement remit has been subject to an inspection and the information from such inspections will be passed to the HSE who will hold and manage a more centralised database.

Business Training

The health and safety team now offer training for businesses as part of the strategy to assist business comply with legislation and also to engage with businesses that fall outside the inspection programme. The training currently offered is the Level 2/3 award in Risk Assessment which is an approved training course endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. The first training event took place in Dunstable on the 31st October 2013 and was deemed to be a success. There is a plan to offer other health and safety topics in the future; however the trainers will need to consult with businesses to establish which training is suited to their needs.

Skin piercing

New skin piercing businesses continue to open requiring officers to make visits to them.

The training of skin piercers is unregulated which can lead to standards being inconsistent. Officers have also found individuals alleging they are competent to carry out body piercing on all parts of the body, including genitals, resulting in an increased challenge for enforcement officers. Officers worked in partnership with a Piercing Training company based in Salford and developed a three day training course especially for Council officers. Two officers then attended the course where they learnt advance theory and practical aspects of body piercing.

This improved knowledge has resulted in better assessment and enforcement of skin piercers, including the recent prohibition of two body piercers in Dunstable who were found to be carrying out unsafe treatment.

In addition to the above, a recent new tattoo business was not allowed to open due to poor hygiene standards. An officer is currently working with the business to improve standards so as to allow them to open.

Warehouse Project

The first phase of this project is now underway. The initial 40 businesses identified have been approached with the business information packs and so far we have 21 people signed up for the free workplace transport training event that we have organised. However, when hand delivering the information packs it was found that a lot of the businesses had either closed or moved. As a result, we have decided to postpone the training day with a view to involving these new businesses in the project. We are currently contacting those businesses that have received the Business Information Packs but not responded to engage with them and get them involved with the training programme that we have arranged.

Safety Advisory Group

We have had another busy summer dealing with a variety of events ranging from road races (on foot and by bike) and street parades, to proposals for large scale music festivals. The current accident investigations into the Warrior Adrenaline Race stemmed from a complaint made from the East of England ambulance Service to the SAG regarding the poor medical services provision at their event in April. A meeting with the event organiser identified a number of failings in terms of their event safety management arrangements. Although they have worked hard to try and address these and significant improvements were seen to be made, two further accidents at their September event are currently being investigated. We have also recently been approached by a local landowner and music promoter regarding plans to stage a 4 day music festival near to Lower Stondon. This was discussed at the September SAG meeting which the promoter and landowner attended. A number of significant concerns were raised by various members of the SAG, including the Police and Public Protection, not least regarding the size, scale and nature of the event. As a result, the promoter and landowner have now gone away to reconsider their proposal with a view to submitting a revised (and hopefully more suitable and sustainable) event proposal to the December SAG meeting.

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