

HSE targets developers in CDM Regulations campaign

Over the last 10 years, 340 people have died in the refurbishment, repair and maintenance sector of the construction industry, with some 38 people being killed last year alone. Now the HSE is targeting small scale developers after recent inspections found basic safety precautions are being ignored



In an effort to prevent further deaths, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a campaign aimed at raising awareness of the dangers with those involved in developing property as part of their business.

The HSE hopes that by making more people aware of their health and safety responsibilities as clients under the Construction (Design and Management)

Regulations 2007 (CDM 2007), fewer people will lose their lives.

The HSE particularly wants small scale developers to visit its website www.hse.gov.uk/property, where they can access free guidance for developers on what they need to know and what they need to do.

In addition, and in support of its Shattered Lives and Hidden Killer campaigns, HSE Inspectors were once again

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out in force visiting construction refurbishment sites across the country in March in its latest enforcement led inspection initiative.

In similar initiatives during the last two years, HSE's Construction Inspectors carried out more than 2,400 refurbishment site inspections nationally and took enforcement action against a third of sites visited.

During the latest inspections, basic safety precautions were found to be very poor and some were so bad that they placed the lives of workers at risk (see story this page).

That's why HSE's key messages to principal contractors on site are to:

- Plan and organise work properly
- Select and use the right equipment
- Keep walkways on site clear of obstructions
- Manage the risks associated with asbestos

The health and safety regulator says that if more attention was paid to getting things right, for example when working at height and by taking a common sense approach to keeping a site in good order, then the number of fatalities and injuries could be reduced.

One in five fail safety checks

One in five construction sites failed health and safety checks during the latest national inspection initiative carried out by the Health and Safety Executive.

Inspectors from Britain's workplace regulator visited 1,759 refurbishment sites during March and checked on how 2,145 contractors were complying with health and safety regulations.

On 348 sites sufficiently serious risks were discovered to warrant enforcement action being taken – either stopping work immediately or ordering improvements to be made. Close to 500 enforcement notices were issued.

HSE said that improvements had been witnessed by its inspectors in certain parts of the country since last year – when inspectors had to take enforcement action on 30% of the sites visited.

Phillip White, HSE's new Chief Inspector of Construction, said: "This inspection initiative was well publicised and for our inspectors to still find this level of disregard for basic health and safety standards on refurbishment sites is disappointing.

"While any improvement has to be welcomed, our inspectors still found practices so far below the acceptable standard that they felt it necessary to take enforcement action on one in five sites. This is still very worrying."

Unsafe work at height practices remain a huge concern. As in the previous initiative, over half of the enforcement action taken this time was as a result of dangerous work at height, which last year (2007/08) led to the death of 34 construction workers.

Last year (2007/08) more than half (52%) of the workers who died on construction sites worked in the refurbishment, repair and maintenance sector.

