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RISK ASSESSMENTS

Charles Buckton, the H&S officer from Stylo plc spoke at the Forum's last seminar in February about how to do a risk assessment and not be petrified, below are some of his notes from the presentation.

I started with stylo 12 years ago as a warehouse operative so I spent a few years getting dirty and didn't just jump straight into H&S straight away.

One of my first jobs that I was given to do was to assess and write all of the risk assessments for the Head Office warehouse, of which there are now 64 combined assessments.

Because I had never done a risk assessment before I was absolutely petrified. I had been asked to write something from scratch that if done wrong could cause serious harm to someone (and I am talking serious injury or loss of life and not just cuts and bruises) if I got it wrong. But then, if I got it right, the assessment could also help reduce the number of accidents that could have occurred by the introduction of a clear and simple instruction that originated from the risk assessment that I wrote.

I started off by using someone else's risk assessment format and knowledge because I didn't have a clue where/how to start, but can safely say now that I can create my own.



Graham Reay & Carol Duerden

Springing into action with Showcase lobby to Lord

Terry Rooney MP set up an opportunity for Yorkshire Occupational Health Projects to meet with Lord McKenzie and other MPs at Westminster on the 17th March 2009.

Representatives of Bradford Occupational Health Project, Sheffield Occupational Advisory Service, Leeds Occupational Advisory Service and Rotherham Occupational Advisory Service showcased the work they do with both workers and employers to help reduce occupational ill health.

Lord McKenzie thanked the groups for their work and said that they are ahead of the rest of the county. He said much of the work of the projects is in line with the recommendations made by Dame Carol Black in her Working For a Healthier Tomorrow review. Lord McKenzie said that he would write to Alan Johnson the Secretary State for

Health about the Yorkshire Occupational Health Projects and the good examples they are.

When asked about the possibility for a National Occupational Health Service, Lord McKenzie felt that it is very difficult to achieve at the moment, as there are no clear delivery pathways (including complexities of a non medical approach) and the Government has not got the funding required.

There is however £40million set aside by Government in its Improving health and work: changing lives budget which has come in response to Dame Carol Black's recommendations. The money is to be split between: Fit 4 Work Service Pilots; Challenge Fund; Occupational Health Coordinators; Gateway's for SME advice; and the Business Health Check Tool.

Lord McKenzie has been invited by Bradford Occupational Health Project to the 2009 Workers' Memorial Day event in Bradford on the 28th of April. The Bradford event will take part during a seminar organised by Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum, in City Hall, and is to look at basic health and safety issues for small businesses, targeting small businesses who have recently been inspected by the HSE and the Local Authority in a joint operation.



Carol Duerden, Jane Howie, Lord McKenzie and Graham Reay



Steven Allen inquest

Steven Allen's mother Judith and family were supported by FACK (Families Against Corporate Killing) and members of Bradford Area Safety Reps Association at a vigil outside an Inquest into Steven's death which took place in early February.

Steven, aged 23, was taken to Bradford Royal Infirmary in March, 2007, with severe head injuries. Two days later his mother Judith took the difficult decision to have his life support machine switched off and his heart went to save the life of a 12 year-old girl.

Steven Allen had been working on a construction of a new waste recycling plant in Midland Road when he became trapped by a Probst scissor-grab machine. The inquest heard that none of contractor JN Bentley's employees had read the safety manual for the machine that killed Steven.

The inquest was told the machine was being used to lift bags of concrete even though the manual had strictly prohibited its use for

anything other than concrete blocks. No staff had received training for the use of the machine nor had there been anyone appointed as a slinger or banksman during the lifting operation. The jury was also told that a safety chain on the machine was broken, which would have restricted how far the jaws would close.

Health and Safety Executive inspector Catherine Rimmer also told the inquest that a certificate demonstrating the competence of the lift operator, David Akrigg, was two years out of date.

A verdict of accidental death was returned by the jury. Judith Allen has criticised this verdict. After the inquest, Mick Anitoniw, representing Mrs Allen, said "It is now for the Health and Safety Executive to decide whether to bring charges under the Health and Safety Act of 1974."

At this stage the HSE has not decided whether to prosecute for health and safety offences, the CPS has decided not to take a manslaughter prosecution.

Stress Website

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recently unveiled a new stress website that will help businesses prevent work-related stress.

The website includes updated advice and guidance, tools to help prevent stress at work, a self-assessment questionnaire for line managers, case studies and good practical examples of things that have worked well for other organisations. The focus of the new website will be the Management Standards for work-related stress which have already been used successfully by many organisations.

Last year in Great Britain a total of 13.5 million days were lost to work-related stress. It is a major cause of occupational ill health resulting in sickness absence, high staff turnover and poor performance for organisations. HSE's Management Standards can help to manage the issue sensibly and minimise the impact of work-related stress on businesses.

To find out how the management standards can work for you log onto www.hse.gov.uk/stress

Workstress Annual Conference

A 2008 survey conducted by the Samaritans confirmed that 38% of Britons cited work as one of their biggest stressors with over 68% reporting high levels of irritability and 56% losing sleep over their work-related worries.

New research looking at the improvement of stress management skills is nearing completion and will be the subject of discussion at the annual Workstress conference to be held on 21st November 2009 in Birmingham. Email ukworkstress@live.co.uk to find out more.

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But if it had not been for that initial push in the right direction by my mentor, I would not still be in H&S and would not be here right now.

Don't get me wrong; it's not as simple as writing the assessments, sending a copy to all of your locations and expecting everyone to adhere to the control measure (safe guards) that you have put in place. You must, above everything else, speak with your employees. Without this initial consultation your risk assessments are useless and have just been created by someone who realistically sits behind a desk or in an office and has never even seen the job/task being completed.

What would happen then is that your staff would receive the assessments, look at what you have written and go "that's not right, I don't do that, that's wrong" at which point you may as well wave goodbye to all of your hard work, as you will not be able to obtain the buy in required.

CONSULT CONSULT CONSULT and CONSULT again.

Your staff do the job/task that you want to assess, it therefore makes perfect sense to ask their advice, they will tell you warts and all, exactly what the hazards are and may even tell you how not to get injured.

Before you start, you do need to make a confirmed decision about how in-depth you need to actually go. Most risk assessments are simple and can be written (with consultation of course) in about 30 minutes, some however may take longer, and that all depends on what you decided upon next.

For instance? You're just about to open a new store/location and you are trying to decide on what type of floor covering to have put down. I can see your all asking in your heads "Charlie, how does this have an impact on my risk assessments"

Well, you decide to put down what you think is an adequate floor covering, but this then is going to be cleaned every day. As it gets cleaned it becomes

slippery, but there is no risk assessment for house keeping or cleaning the floor, as you thought that this would not be an issue. As it is slippery this then results in an increase in your accident ratings and statistics and ultimately a potential increase in personal injury claims. Before you know it the new store/location has already made a loss and has now become a millstone around your neck.



Or your decision could be made easier making the decision to have a risk assessment for general housekeeping and ensuring that the floor will not become a cause for concern when it is cleaned. Your risk assessment needs to also include the use of wet floor signs and a schedule for housekeeping that involves all cleaning to be done outside normal business hours, therefore reducing your accident rates and ultimately your court and insurance costs for potential liability claims.

This then takes me onto my next point and 2 areas that (in my mind) are always linked together, these are Hazards and Control Measures (safe guards).

The best way to simplify this would be the following:

If Jo (one of your employees) has been asked to use the goods lift to bring in some roll cages full of stock into the stock room, then there are a number of things that could happen to him.

1. He could cut himself quite badly if the roll cage is damaged

2. He could electrocute himself on the faulty wiring of the goods lift
3. The roll cage could fall on top of him if it has been overloaded with heavier items placed at the top, thus crushing his chest and ultimately killing him.

Always think of the worst-case scenario, not a pleasant thought but it is better to be prepared. The control measures (safeguards/precautions) will tell Jo that he

1. Must inspect the roll cages for damage, therefore removing the possibility of him severely cutting himself from the damaged section.
2. As an employer you must service and test the lift on a regular basis, but this would be written down as a control measure

And as he inspected the roll cage

3. He also notices that there are a number of heavier items located at the top, therefore turning on that little light bulb in his head telling him that this has been stacked incorrectly and does not meet current company guidelines, which tells him not to move it and report the issue to his supervisor.

So you can see how hazards can be removed by the introduction of a control measure and therefore making the task that little bit safer for Jo to work, providing a safe and healthy working environment.

What I have done for the stores I look after, is firstly write down what jobs/tasks are done in every single location, then speak to a cross section of differing store types (shopping centre, high street stores etc) to find out how they safe guard themselves from injury or complete the task in safety whilst also considering what information, training etc the company would give them. Ends

see full story on our website

WHEN SOMEBODY DIES AT WORK

Workers' Memorial Day 2009

12 noon Tuesday 28th April

Outside Bradford City Hall

All Welcome



THEY ARE NEVER THE ONLY VICTIM

Work deaths harm whole families • Workers' Memorial Day • 28 April • www.hazards.org/wmd



'After the Inspector called'

Free seminar on health and safety issues found during the recent HSE/CBMDC

inspection campaign

Tuesday 28th April 2009

Bradford City Hall

Banqueting Suite

9.30am - 12.45

(refreshments provided)

BAOHSF

Tel: 01535 691049

E.mail jane@baohsf.org.uk

web: www.baohsf.org.uk

13 Scott Street

Keighley BD21 2JH

Tel: 01535 691049

WHAT

Workers' Health Advice Team

Unison Offices, 2nd Floor

Auburn House, Upper Piccadilly

Bradford, BD1 3NU

Tel: 01274 393949

see the Forum website at www.baohsf.org.uk

To receive newsletters, seminar lists and keep in touch please complete this forum membership slip

Name _____

Organisation _____

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Send to Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum, 13 Scott Street, Keighley, BD21 2JH