

Bradford Area Occupational Health and Safety Forum

Slips, Trips and Falls Seminar



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Introduction

- Area Safety Rep for 17 years
- Communication Workers Union (CWU) is the biggest union for the communications industry in the UK with 210,000 members
- Bradford & District is a Postal Branch covering;
- Postal and Admin workers
- Cleaners
- Catering grades

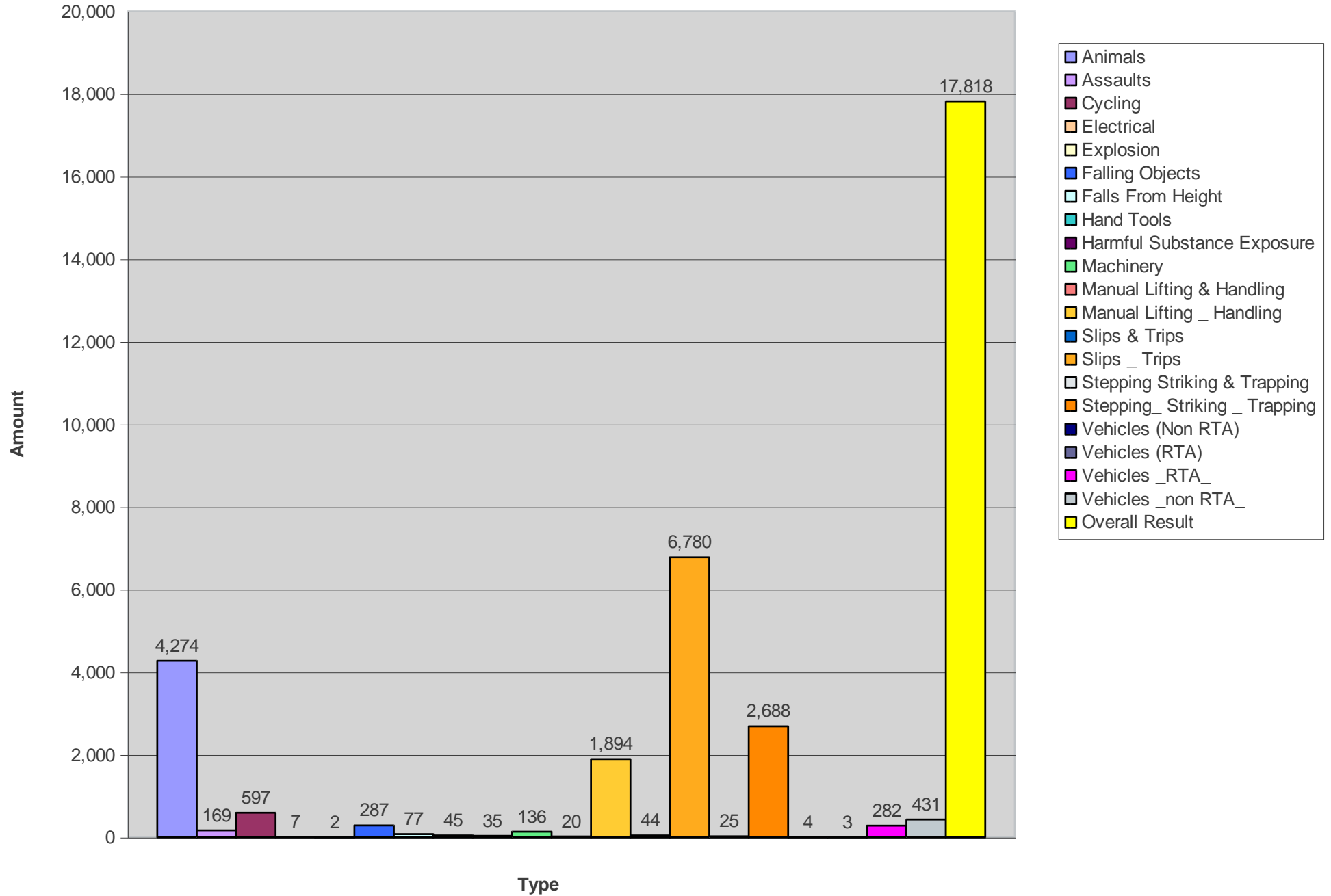
Royal Mail

- Deliver to 25+ million addresses daily
- Commercial and residential
- 1400 Delivery Offices
- 1000 SPDO's (tiny workplaces appended to rural Post Offices)
- Around 60 mail centres
- 165000 staff (currently)!

Slips, trips, falls and Royal Mail

- Biggest single accident type in Royal Mail
- 2009/10 Slips Trips - 9,439 from a total of 22,613 accidents
- 2010/11 Slips Trips - 6,780 from a total of 17,818 accidents
- Significant reduction but still a massive problem
- Figures represent a huge cost on a personal level for the victims
- Huge and unnecessary cost to the business

Number of accidents by Type 2010/11



STF Hazards we face

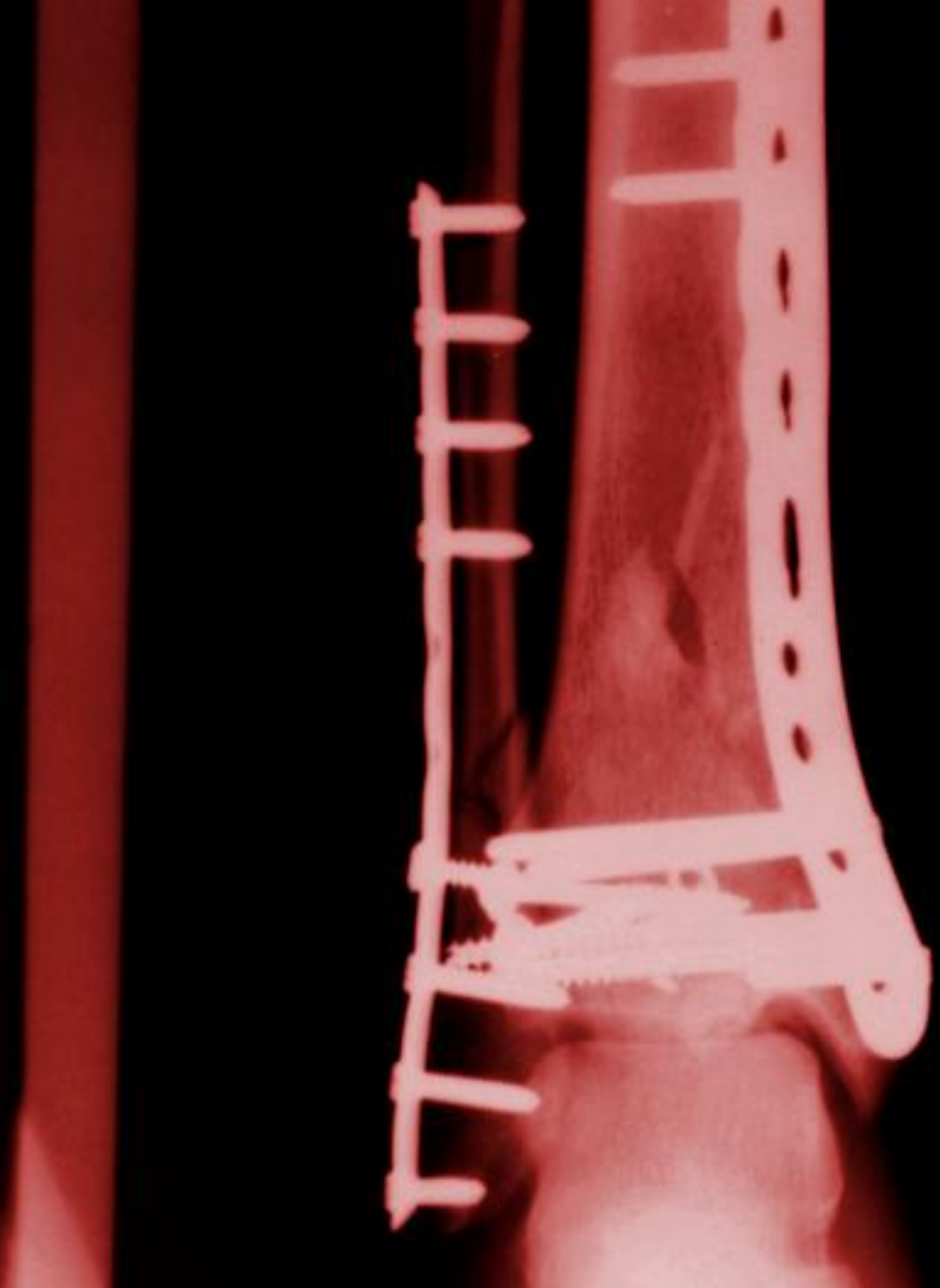
- Indoor - our own and customer premises
- Outdoor- our own and customer premises
- By far the most hazardous areas - On The Streets
- On/in Residential properties, Gardens etc
- Severe Weather
- Unsafe Conditions
- Unsafe Acts











Examples



Extreme example



Indoor STF hazards



Broken ankle



Control measure

- Gather information from staff on delivery
- Educate staff on 'Significant Hazards'
- Manager to prioritise hazards and assess risk
- Attempt to eliminate the hazard at source
- Write to customer, local authority or other responsible authority
- Where necessary – suspend delivery
- Record residual risk in Walk log and mark delivery frame

Tools

- WRAP
- Walk Risk Assessment Platform
- Excel based tool for recording hazards
- Outputs generic solutions including letters to customers
- Staff understanding and input vital for effectiveness
- System contains generic standards for Bag weights and Dog Hazards
- Can be updated daily in response to new information

Hazard card

Date:

Walk number:

Name:

Location or address of hazard:

New hazard Hazard removed/resolved

Type and description of hazard:

Your safety always comes first



slips, trips and falls the consequences add up



your safety always comes first



Walk Logs

- Every delivery has a 'Log' – Ring binder
- Contains important information about the delivery
- Includes hazard information such as Slip, trip and fall hazards that were not removed
- Effective only if staff consult them
- Supplemented by Hazard cards and Dog stickers
- Remind Delivery staff whilst preparing round
- Enable 'turning' of a letter to provide 'real time' reminder of a hazard

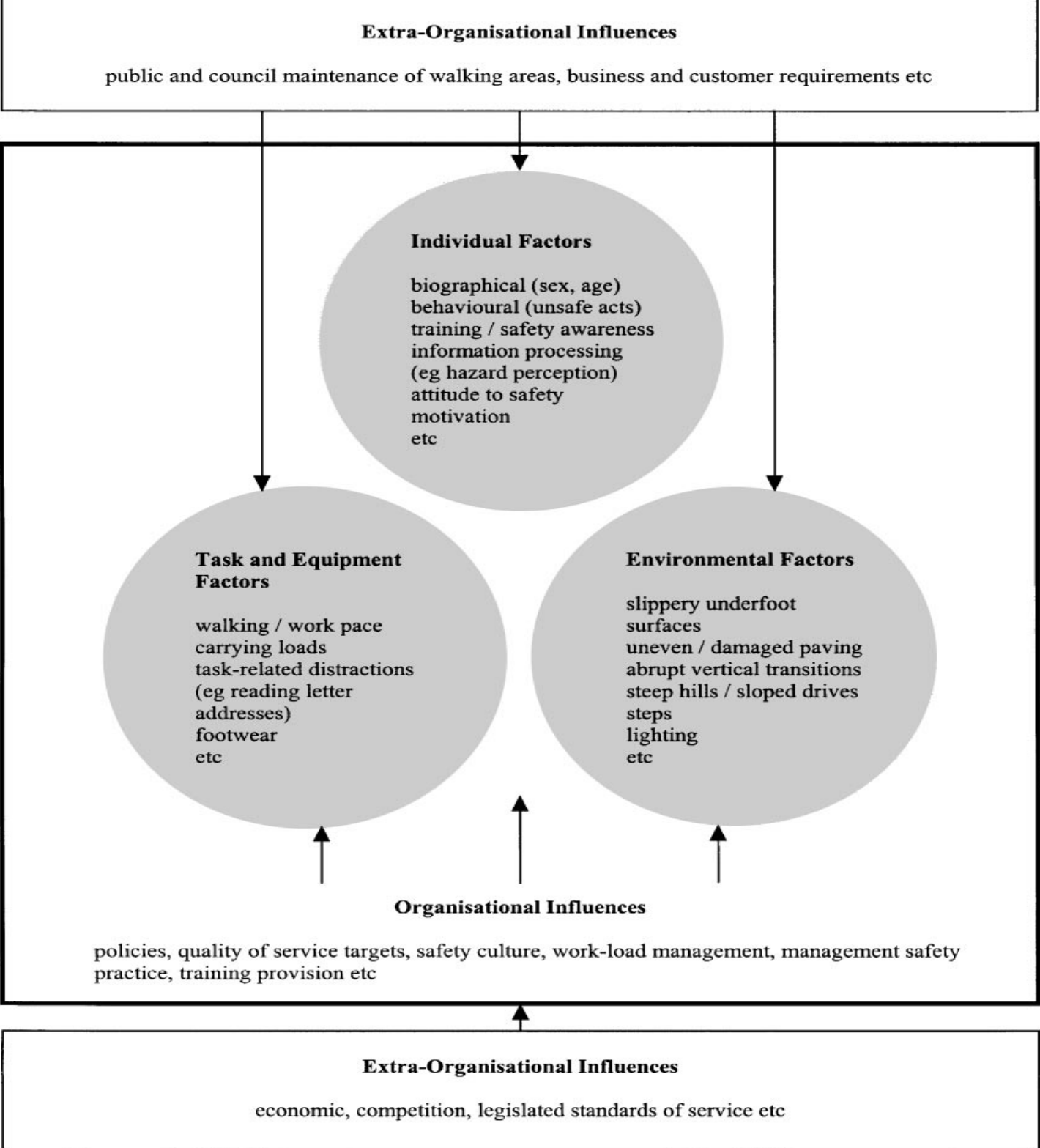
What we can control

- Correct footwear must be worn – Choice of 3 types
- Risk assessments up to date?
- Bag weights – a heavy bag can promote a fall in the event of a stumble!
- Training – Hazard perception etc
- Instruction – Specific advice by hazard
- Supervision – Patrol and challenge/support
- This includes discussing hazard awareness

Hidden Perils

- Latent organisational factors?
- Research identified this as significant contributory factor
- The way work is organised
- Pressure of work – either self imposed or due to unrealistic work load
- People will respond to these factors by rushing, reading whilst walking, taking unauthorised short-cuts
- Doing things at variance with their training and instruction
- Ignore such factors and you risk missing a real 'route cause'

Source: Haslem et al



How you can help

- As a business customer – consider visitors to your premises
- Imagine you were delivering to as many as 800 different addresses every day!
- As a domestic customer – think of the Postie
- Can they get to your letter box and away without being exposed to significant STF (or any) risks?
- Its a partnership between customer and Postie
- A good partnership is a safe one!

Trade union approach

- CWU work closely with employer(s)
- Safety Reps should be involved in all levels of the risk control processes
- Involved in the risk assessment
- Involved in investigations when things go wrong
- Advice after an accident including legal/benefits help
- Involvement in safety as equal partners with employer

Blame Culture

- As targets become more challenging
- Temptation to simply blame employee
- Masks the real root cause
- Can and does suppress accident reporting
- This deprives you of the opportunity to address root causes and prevent recurrence
- More serious accidents can occur because of this
- HSE warns against this in HSG 65 & Accident Investigation HSG 245

CWU Position on Slips, trips and falls

- Involve Safety Reps and Front-line Staff
- Gather high quality hazard information
- Process and prioritise by hazard significance
- Act decisively
- If a safe delivery is not possible - suspend
- Communicate with customer, landowner, local authority
- Review effectiveness of risk control measures after action taken
- Constantly keep the profile of safety and staff involvement at a high level through joint working
- Never rest on your laurels – there is always more to be done!