

This month's comment is not on political agendas or occupational risk. Sometimes it is important to stop and reflect – to realise that none of the campaigns, regulations, or safety or risk management challenges matter if *you* are not out there, making a difference.

There is no doubt that you contribute to success in many ways. As determined advocates for human wellbeing and worker protection those are grounds enough for personal motivation, celebration and making a difference. The part you play is always about leadership, standards and commitment; you are all engaged in workplaces around the world as trusted, respected leaders in your area. In the rough and tumble of workplaces perhaps not always recognised every day, but you will be valuable to your business or organisation.

Value has many aspects and is not always measured in monetary terms. Your leadership and qualities, your commitment to rolling up your sleeves and being the pragmatic voice of reason for the businesses you work in all make you an important asset.

At IIRSM we want to recognise and promote these qualities and develop existing, or find new, ways of supporting you in what you do well.

We want to help you more, to improve your recognition, promote the difference you make and support you in your career, wherever it takes you. As professional practitioners, advisors or managers we want to help you stand out as the individuals that employers and businesses should really want. Your chosen direction might be focused on health and safety, or role changes may have opened up opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in complementary areas such as enterprise risk management, quality, sustainability and business continuity, to name just a few.

So thank you, all of you, for making a difference around the world, and in the world of work.

It's all about you



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FIRE SAFETY

'Death trap' hotel put thousands at risk



Left: the main bar had no smoke alarm; above: smoke alarms were missing throughout the hotel and fire doors had holes in them

- Gilson Hotel had no fire alarm system
- Owner handed suspended jail term and fine

The owner of hotel in Hull has been handed a suspended prison sentence and fined £50,000 after putting up to 14,000 lives at risk by operating a hotel with faulty fire alarms and blocked fire exits.

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service inspected the hotel on 12 September 2012 following a complaint by Hull City Council.

Numerous breaches of the Fire Safety Order were found, including a fire detector in a bedroom covered by a plastic bag and exits blocked by rolled up carpets and furniture. The breaches were so serious a Prohibition Notice was served, forcing the closure of the hotel. Further enforcement notices were issued to improve fire safety standards across the whole premises.

Though the notices were complied with, it was apparent that the hotel had been operating without a fully functioning fire alarm system. This meant that, had a fire broken out, it would not have been discovered until someone noticed it, delaying the evacuation of staff and guests.

Kamaljit Kaur – who bought the establishment as a retirement investment

– appeared at Hull Crown Court accused of breaching six articles of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

During sentencing, Judge Jeremy Richardson referred to the “lamentable lapses” in fire safety over a long period of time by Kaur and a “dereliction of responsibility” when it came to bringing the hotel up to an acceptable standard.

“Numerous breaches of the Fire Safety Order were found, including a fire detector in a bedroom covered by a plastic bag”

In his closing statement, Judge Richardson said the breaches can only be categorised as “very serious” and as any “fire could not have been contained”, he classed the Gilson Hotel as a “potential death trap”.

On 13 April 2015, Kaur was sentenced to nine months in jail, suspended for two years. She was also fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £15,000 of the £18,000 costs incurred.



See more photographs at <http://bit.ly/1ykCAme>

TRAINING

£600k fine for animal feed co

- Soya meal pile collapsed on driver
- Training had not been carried out at site

A leading nutritional feed supplier for animals has been fined £600,000 following the death of a visiting lorry driver who was buried under a mound of soya meal.

Malcolm Harrison, an experienced HGV driver, had arrived at Cargill's Seaforth docks on Merseyside on 6 September 2012 to collect a load.

There were no witnesses to the incident, but it is believed the 64 year old moved to the back of his trailer to tip off some excess soya. He was later found buried under eight tonnes of stockpile.

Liverpool Crown Court heard that updated training stating that drivers stay in their vehicles had been rolled out across the company's European and African centres but had not taken place at Seaforth.

Judge Thomas Teague said: “Death was a readily foreseeable, if not obvious risk in this case.

“I have referred to the fact, known to the defendant at the time, that engulfment is the commonest cause of accidental death in the grain industry.

“The company's failure to provide adequate protection against that risk to non-employees visiting its Seaforth site was a serious and significant breach.”

Judge Teague said the breach was “neither deliberate nor reckless”, but arose out of “negligence”.

On 27 April 2015 Cargill plc was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs after it admitted breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act.



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SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

'Incompetent' brothers jailed over building collapse

Two brothers have been sent to prison for safety failures after a building collapse in Sheffield.

Naveed and Rizwan Hussain were prosecuted by the HSE following the collapse of a three-storey terrace in Brook Hill on 23 March 2013.

Three people were injured when structural damage to a central wall caused the collapse of two flats on the upper floor. The immediate area was evacuated and some local residents were left temporarily homeless following the incident.

Sheffield Crown Court heard the two "incompetent" brothers had destabilised the structure of the building while refurbishing the basement.

HSE investigators found the Hussain brothers were not competent to carry out the work and were responsible for a number of safety failings.

Neither of the defendants had any building experience, training or planning



The judge said it was 'little short of a miracle' that no one had been killed given the extent of the collapse

permission for the structural works they were carrying out. They had dispensed with the services of a building firm and structural engineer and decided to carry out the work themselves to save cash, the court heard.

Rizwan Hussain was jailed for 12 months and fined £42,000 with £40,000 in costs after pleading guilty to contravening the Health and Safety at Work Act, breaching Regulation 28(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM) and failing to comply with two prohibition notices.

His younger brother Naveed Hussain was also handed a 12-month custodial sentence, and was fined £40,000 with £60,000 to pay in costs after admitting breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act and a separate breach of the CDM Regulations.

In sentencing, the judge said it was "little short of a miracle that more people were not seriously injured or killed". He described it as a very serious incident caused by the Hussains' arrogance and greed, adding that the public "would be appalled at anything less than a custodial sentence".

WORK EQUIPMENT

Council in court after worker thrown from tractor

- Bristol Council guilty of PUWER breaches
- Vehicle was not fitted with seat belt

Bristol City Council has been fined for safety failings after a park keeper suffered serious injuries when she was thrown from a tractor as it overturned.

The 51 year old worker broke her pelvis and badly damaged an Achilles tendon in the incident in Netham Park, Bristol on 30 May 2012. She remained off work for a year but has since returned and is undertaking an office job.

Bristol Magistrates' Court heard the park keeper, who was carrying out maintenance work, was driving the tractor with a trailer attached and had braked as the tractor descended a slope. The vehicle skidded and she turned to avoid a fence but it overturned, throwing her from the seat.

HSE investigators found the tractor was not fitted with a seat belt or any type of restraint and the council had failed to ensure its employee had received adequate training on the use of the tractor.

The investigation also identified the nearly new tractor and trailer had been acquired by Bristol City Council shortly before the incident but outside the normal procurement procedure and, as a result, no supplier training was provided.

Bristol City Council was fined a total of £20,000 and ordered to pay £4,700 in prosecution costs after admitting breaching Regulation 9(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations in that it failed to adequately train workers; and 26(2) of the same regs for failing to provide a suitable restraining system.

InBrief

NI rejects changes to RIDDOR

Northern Ireland will not follow the rest of the UK in extending the threshold for reporting under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

A public consultation carried out by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) found mixed views on the potential changes, which included extending the reporting of a work related injury from three to seven days off work and condensing the illness categories.

RIDDOR was amended in Great Britain in 2012 and 2013 to bring in the above changes, but Northern Ireland chose not to do so at the time. Instead it opted for a consultation, which received 13 responses; eight of which were in favour and four against. One did not express an opinion either way.

SCHOOL SAFETY

HSE clamps down on schools

The HSE has launched nearly 300 investigations at schools in the past three years, according to *Schools Week* (www.schoolsweek.co.uk). Inspectors have investigated 293 incidents at schools since April 2011, including nine fatalities, an investigation has revealed. Of those, 150 were into major incidents.

More than 100 enforcement notes have been issued – nine were prohibition notices requiring an activity to be immediately stopped. The Freedom of Information figures show a total of £410,215 in fines have been handed out by the courts, according to research by The Key, an education support provider.

The figures also show there have been 28 prosecutions for health and safety breaches at schools in the past three years. The largest fine was £100,000 issued to Stonyhurst College, a historic private school in Clitheroe, Lancashire, after a stonemason developed silicosis (see www.healthandsafetyatwork.com/coshh/stonyhurst-silicosis for the full story).

The City of Salford Council was also fined £20,000 in April last year. A six-year-old boy with autism and learning difficulties lost his index finger after his hand got stuck in a gate at Springwood School in Manchester. An HSE investigation found the council had failed to act on an earlier report that identified the risk of children trapping their fingers in gates.

Just last month we reported on the prosecution of the governors of a boy's grammar school in Kent after a pupil sustained life threatening head injuries when he was struck by a shot put during a PE lesson.

The court ruled The Judd School's risk assessments were inadequate and not followed (see page 5 of issue 05 of *Insight*).

28

prosecutions for breaches at schools in past three years

LIFTING OPERATIONS

Poor planning led to piling hammer crush



Construction giant Costain and a subcontractor were ordered to pay penalties totalling more than £61,000

- Four-tonne piling hammer slipped from sling
- Worker broke back, hip and thigh

Engineering and construction giant Costain has been fined after a worker suffered fractures to his back, hip and leg after he was knocked over by a four-tonne piling hammer.

Eric Wilson was controlling the piling hammer, suspended from an excavator, during work to renew a sewage outfall across the beach in Hartlepool when the incident happened on 16 September 2012.

He was standing in seawater, which was about one metre deep, using the hammer to drive timber piles into the beach. But as the hammer was moved from one pile to the next, the sling supporting it broke and the hammer fell, knocking him into the water.

Wilson broke several bones in his back, pelvis and left thigh, suffered muscle damage to his back, shoulder and knee and was in hospital for 11 days.

He has been unable to return to work and though he can walk unaided he still suffers persistent pain and has been forced to move to a bungalow to avoid stairs.

HSE investigators found that Wilson's employer, Southbay Civil Engineering, had failed to properly plan, supervise and carry out the work.

The court was told that a smaller hammer, which was easily lifted into

position by the excavators on site, had been identified when the work was initially planned. However, the smaller hammer was found "not to be powerful enough" so Southbay brought in a larger hammer.

The additional weight was not an issue for the excavators, but the extra length led to problems when lifting the hammer over some piles.

In an attempt to gain extra height, unsafe working practices were used, which involved stressing the slings over the sharp edges of the excavator buckets.

This caused the sling to break and hammer to fall, which "could have been avoided" if the work plan had been changed when the larger hammer was introduced, and a suitable lifting machine had been used.

Southbay Civil Engineering pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 8(1) (c) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations and was fined £19,000 and ordered to pay £8,652.45 in prosecution costs.

Costain was fined £19,000 and ordered to pay £14,895.25 costs after pleading guilty to breaching Regulation 22(1)(a) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

"The failures by both companies to look properly at the risks involved and then organise the lifting operation properly put staff at needless risk," said HSE inspector Martin Smith.

STRESS

Managers and staff feel most stressed at work

Almost half of senior managers claim to suffer from stress all or most of the time, according to a study by AXA PPP Healthcare. The research also found that most senior managers (92 per cent) reported having experienced stress.

The biggest cause of stress among senior managers was financial worries at 34 per cent, while workload was the biggest cause of stress for 28 per cent of them.

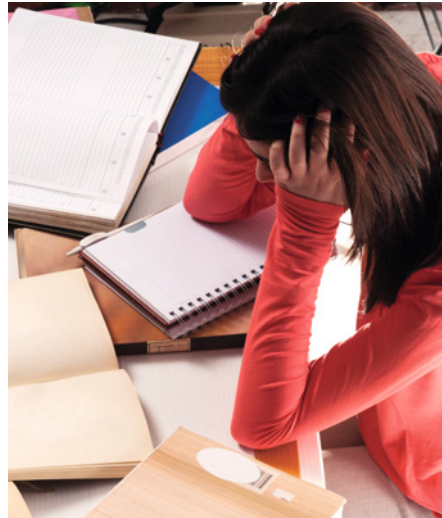
The survey of 1,000 senior business managers and owners and 1,000 employees was conducted for AXA PPP healthcare by OnePoll.

For employees, 45 per cent named workload as their biggest cause of stress and 26 per cent blamed financial worries. Worries about job security were the biggest cause of stress for 22 per cent of both senior managers and employees.

Work was the place which gave the most stress for both employees and senior managers – 44 per cent of senior managers and employees felt most stressed in the workplace.

Stress at home and work was reported by 30 per cent of senior managers and 43 per cent of employees; home was the main source of stress for 26 per cent of managers and 13 per cent of employees.

Dr Mark Winwood, director of psychological services at AXA PPP healthcare, said: "It is concerning to see that almost half of the senior managers



45% of employees said workload was main cause of stress, and it was a problem for 28% of their seniors

surveyed report experiencing constant stress.

"Occasionally experiencing symptoms of stress is to be expected.

"However, chronic stress can create or exacerbate existing mental health issues, including anxiety and depression and, as such, it is important to manage.

"By promoting stress-reducing behaviours wherever possible, such as a reduction in unnecessary out-of-hours emails, flexible working and an open culture where all employees can discuss their concerns and issues, businesses can minimise the effects of stress on all levels of the workforce."

InBrief

Pirelli pays £196,000 after fatality

Tyre manufacturer Pirelli has been fined £150,000 and ordered to pay £46,706 in costs after an employee died when he was trapped in an industrial autoclave for more than two hours.

George Falder was found dead in the autoclave, which is used to heat tyre parts to temperatures of up to 145 degrees Celsius, at the firm's factory in Carlisle in September 2012.

Pirelli did not have a system for ensuring the autoclave was checked before it was switched on.

Improvement notice for EDF

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has served an improvement notice on EDF Energy Nuclear Generation after an incident at Heysham 1 power station led to the release of about 30 tonnes of clean carbon dioxide from a failed pipe. There was no leak of any radioactive material and no one was injured.

A preliminary investigation by the ONR found the company had failed to meet a condition of its nuclear site licence that requires it to make and implement adequate arrangements to regularly and systematically examine, inspect, maintain and test its facilities.

EDF must demonstrate improvements to the examination and maintenance regime in its carbon dioxide storage and distribution plant by 30 September 2015.

ASBESTOS

Medicals now required for non-licensed work

New medical surveillance requirements for workers carrying out notifiable non-licensed asbestos work (NNLW) came into effect on 1 May.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 require that anyone planning to carry out any NNLW must have a medical examination before this work can commence, unless the worker has had a suitable examination in the previous three years.

These examinations can be carried out by an appropriate fully registered medical practitioner and must be repeated every three years (or before

if advised by the medical practitioner) while this type of work is undertaken or is expected to be undertaken.

"For workers in the asbestos removal industry medical vigilance is vitally important due to the serious health issues related to exposure to asbestos. Covering NNLW will provide workers with facts on their health, as well as emphasise to them the importance of control measures and good working practices within the industry," commented Steve Sadley, chief executive of the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

Offshore wind injury statistics released

There were 959 safety incidents on offshore wind installations last year, according to the second annual report from the G9 Offshore Wind Health and Safety Association.

Most of the incidents (655) were near misses, but 44 led to lost work days. None were fatal.

In 2013, the G9 recorded 616 incidents, of which 66 led to lost work days. The samples for the two years were different, however, which makes it difficult to compare numbers directly.



See <http://bit.ly/1jdUQ8u> for the full analysis.





Are the current methods and materials used in your communication of risk fit for purpose? Are they inclusive and accessible to stakeholders?”

It's all Greek to me

Any organisation's communication strategy should consider varying levels of literacy; cascading information clearly is critical where safety is concerned.

Communication is a key part of any risk management policy. It is also both a legal and moral requirement. But are the current methods and materials used in your communication of risk fit for purpose? Are they inclusive and accessible to all stakeholders? To answer yes to these questions you must be sure that the intended audience of your risk communication has the necessary levels of occupational safety and health (OSH) literacy to understand them.

What is OSH literacy? Many of us will be familiar with the terms financial literacy, health literacy, computer literacy, legal literacy and workplace literacy. Indeed there's practically a subject-specific 'literacy' for every type of profession or specialism you can think of. But incredibly, as yet there is little research or information regarding occupational safety and health literacy.

Based on the definition for health literacy given by the World Health Organization, I have, for the purposes of this article, defined it as: the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, produce and understand basic OSH information and services needed to make appropriate decisions regarding health and safety at work or in training.

The British Dyslexia Association states that one in 10 working adults has dyslexia and 40 per cent of these have severe dyslexia. The American Dyslexia Association figures are considerably higher. Research shows that in the UK one in six working adults has non-functional levels of literacy. About nine per cent of all men have, in varying levels of severity, the red-green deficiency form of colour

blindness. This means that they cannot distinguish the difference between red and green – two of the main colours used in occupational health and safety signage.

The OECD Global Survey of Adult Skills 2013 (<http://bit.ly/1xrv0HM>) found that in most countries, there are significant proportions of adults who score at lower levels of proficiency on the literacy and numeracy scales. Across the countries involved in the study, between 4.9 per cent and 27.7 per cent of adults are proficient at only the lowest levels in literacy.

Research has shown that there is a definite link between low levels of literacy and workplace accidents – employees with poor literacy are more likely to have accidents. This puts themselves and their colleagues at risk, increases the need and cost for medical services leading to higher absenteeism, and damages long-term productivity (worldliteracyfoundation.org).

These statistics also vary significantly with different demographic groups: young people aged 16–25 are more likely to have an accident in their first six months on the job than in any other part of their career, according to the International Labour Organization. Young workers in this age range are less likely to have had any prior knowledge of OSH and risk communications within the workplace. Research has also shown that people with low levels of literacy tend to find employment in high risk industries such as construction, transport, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing.

The information in this article does not take into account people with other information acquisition issues, such

as visual and auditory impairments. Communication of OSH risk has its own subject-specific meta-language including a large number of signs, symbols and colour codes. It can become even more specialised and specific depending on the industry sector.

All of this means that OSH is a specialised type of literacy in its own right and deserves its place on the list beside the other types of 'literacies'. This needs to be acknowledged and taken into account by employers and training providers when they consider communicating risk within the work environment or place of training. However, as an experienced literacy and OSH teacher and trainer, I have found that very often this is not the case – usually there is a disconnect between modes of OSH and risk communication and their intended audience, many of whom have no prior knowledge or experience of OSH regardless of their general literacy levels or receptive skills ability.

In a 2003 survey, the HSE found that its current leaflets have a readability level higher than desired and a level of comprehensibility suitable for undergraduates, (HSE, Ferguson et al 2003). Though the report was published in 2003 and the HSE has made great efforts in its policies regarding accessibility, general OSH/risk communications have not changed much and I believe this needs to be addressed.

David Magee SIIRSM is a qualified teacher and safety practitioner (davidmagee@oshliteracy.org) For hints and tips on communicating risk information effectively see www.oshliteracy.org

What is reasonable adjustment?

It's not always clear what 'reasonable' is – and one adjustment will not necessarily be reasonable for another person, even if it is believed that the disability is similar. Therefore each case needs to be considered separately. What is clear is that adjustments will only have to be made if it's reasonable to do so.

The individual

Employers need to consider the nature of the individual's disability: are the changes practicable and will the changes help the employee overcome any disadvantage?

The business

Additionally the size of the organisation can be taken into consideration, including the resources available and the overall cost of the adjustments in order to determine if the adjustment is reasonable or not. An adjustment in one organisation may be considered reasonable because of the size and resources, while in another the same change would be deemed unreasonable. As such, the employer cannot rely on other cases to justify why an adjustment has not been made or considered to be unreasonable.

There are three duties that an employer must comply with in order to make it easier for disabled employees to access or do something and are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person.

Equal opportunities

The first requirement involves changing the way employers do things, and



© Getty Images/SimonSimons



requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' in order to ensure that the way things are done are changed so that disabled individuals are not placed at a substantial disadvantage and have equal opportunities in applying for, and staying in, work. Employers can even consider making reasonable adjustments on a temporary basis.

Make way for change

The second requirement involves making changes to overcome barriers created by the physical features of a workplace. Employers should also ensure that they make reasonable adjustments even if they don't employ the person directly, including workers, trainees and apprentices.

Employers should make the changes if the features are creating any form of barrier for employees with disabilities. In some instances the structure and layout of a building or premises may make it more difficult for employees with disabilities to access or use without being at a disadvantage.

When considering access issues, employers could make adjustments such as removing, changing or providing a way of avoiding the physical feature. For example, providing ramps and stairway lifts, making doorways wider or installing automatic doors.

Aid your workers

The third requirement is for employers to consider that individuals may need a particular 'aid' or 'piece of equipment'

to assist them, and this may even include the use of additional services, often referred to as 'auxiliary aids and services'. Employers could introduce things such as a portable induction loop (for employees with hearing aids), hiring a sign language interpreter, or providing company information and updates in an alternative format; for

example in Braille or in an audio format.

Don't fall foul of the law

Employers failing to meet these duties could face claims of disability discrimination and ultimately this could end up being costly given that there is no upper limit on discrimination claims.

Where no adjustment is made, employers would need to be able to show a legitimate justification as to why they considered it to be unreasonable to change the provision, criteria or practice. Employment Tribunals will consider that there may be some justification as to why an employer did not make a reasonable adjustment, and, as such, prevent any claim from being considered to be direct disability discrimination. However the Employment Tribunal could still deem the failure to be indirect disability discrimination, which would still result in substantial penalties awarded against the employer.

This article was provided by Avensure, which provides free advice to IIRSM Members 24 hours a day, seven days a week (UK only). To book a free consultation or for more information, please call 0330 100 7631631 (standard rate).

CORPORATE BRANDING

Member logos

Further to last month's article about development of a new member logo we have received some feedback from members suggesting that logos denoting different levels of membership would be welcome. The Membership Committee has considered this and agreed that logos can be made available to members to illustrate their membership level.

Therefore you are now able to download the relevant logo by logging into the My Profile section of the website and following the link to Member Logos.

Acknowledgement

Last month we featured an article written by Tim Marsh FIIRSM entitled *Cultivating Happiness*. This article first appeared in British Safety Council's *Safety Management* magazine and was reproduced with its kind permission.

IN MEMORIAM

Passing of Honorary Life President, John Bennett FIIRSM DipSM, 1924–2015

Just as this issue goes to press, it is with great sadness that we have received the news that our Honorary Life President, John Bennett, passed away on Friday 1 May 2015. John was a founding member of the Institute and continued throughout his life to provide support and guidance. He will be sadly missed by those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Appointed to the IIRSM Board of Governors in 1990, having been a member since 1975, John was elected chairman in August 1996 and served in this position for three years.

John stepped down as president in August 1999 and was awarded Honorary Life President status in recognition of his contribution to the health and safety world and his commitment to IIRSM. He attended the House of Lords Luncheon regularly and took a keen interest in the activities of the Institute, regularly making suggestions and providing unstinting support. John contributed to planning for the 40th anniversary reception, which will take place in July and it is with great regret that we accept he will not now be able to join us.

"John was highly committed and had a passion for health and safety and encouraging those with an interest in health and safety to get involved and further their careers," said IIRSM president Peter Hall. "During his time as president, John was very influential in how the Institute developed and continually sought ways to enhance our influence in safety at



work, in the home and during leisure time. Upon his retirement the Institute conferred upon him Honorary Life President and he continued to be in regular contact with the trustees and members to discuss opportunities and share ideas."

"During my period in office John was always available to provide advice and counsel and I will miss this. I know that John very much wanted to be at the Institute's 40th anniversary reception and we are saddened he will not be with us. However we will ensure that his passing is marked in an appropriate manner and we shall be sure to raise a toast on the occasion in his memory."

The Council and team at IIRSM extend our sincere condolences to John's family at this very sad time.

UPCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

Dates for your diary



Yorkshire

12 May, Doncaster
Topic: Legislation update and lone working
Register: roger.rustom@nacro.org.uk

Isle of Wight

12 May, Newport
Topic: The face of health and safety five years on
Register: johnashleya12@hotmail.com

Northern Home Counties

26 May, Hemel Hempstead
Topic: British Standards Institute
Register: ianstrong30@tiscali.co.uk

Suffolk

19 May, Stowmarket
Topic: Latest Sentencing Guidelines
Register: chrismatthews63@btinternet.com

Wales

21 May, Cardiff
Topic: Air Monitoring
Register: steve.bergiers@hotmail.com

South East Branch

1 June 2015 at 2pm
Topic: CDM 2015 with Greg Brown, IIRSM
Register: ph@richardlawrenceassociates.co.uk

United Arab Emirates/ Middle East

3 June, Abu Dhabi
Topic: TBC
Register: matthew.cox@zublin-international.com

East Midlands

11 June, Derbyshire
Topic: AGM
Register: catherinewilkes@ntlworld.com

Cambridgeshire

1 July, St Neots
Topic: TBC
Register: davidjillam@btinternet.com

Contact us



Contributions to *Insight* come from the IIRSM team, Technical Committee and members. If you have any comments or observations on anything you read in *Insight* this month, please email insight@iirsm.org

If you are interested in contributing an article for *Insight* please email an outline of your proposal to the Editor, Kellie Mundell: kellie.mundell@lexisnexis.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Know your benefits

Please remember that you have access to three helplines as part of your IIRSM membership:

- Practice/technical helpline: 01296 678465
- HR helpline: 0330 100 7631
- Legal helpline: 0845 676 9498

CANADA

Young workers don't speak up about safety

Young workers are more vulnerable to accidents and less likely to raise safety concerns with their employers, according to new research.

The report, published in the June issue of the *Journal of Safety Research*, studied more than 19,000 people between the ages of 15 and 25 from across Canada over a four-week period. A third of those surveyed said they had one minor workplace injury – or 'microaccident' – in the past month, and the incidence of microaccidents was the highest among the youngest workers, aged 15 to 18.

Those workers spoke up less frequently in the face of dangerous work and reported neglecting work safety rules more often than their older counterparts, the research by the University of Calgary found.

BRAZIL

Work stopped at Olympic venue

Brazil's Ministry for Labour recently stopped construction work at two venues being built for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro next year due to health and safety concerns.

Construction at a tennis arena was stopped and work was partially suspended at the velodrome, the ministry said, citing a "grave and imminent danger to the physical safety of workers".

The safety issue at the velodrome involved an access ramp being too steep, while at the tennis arena work was stopped due to missing guard rails.

MALTA

Immunisation call for teachers and pupils

The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) has appealed to the education minister to introduce immunisation for educators and pupils in order to prevent chickenpox.

The MUT said chickenpox, which is highly contagious and is easily transmitted, poses risks to pupils and adults alike. Moreover, the condition is a primary cause for concern for pregnant teachers since it may have serious consequences for the unborn baby.

BANGLADESH

Benetton agrees contribution to Rana Plaza compensation fund

Clothing giant Benetton has announced it is donating \$1.1 million (£740,000) to a compensation fund for victims of the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh, the worst industrial accident ever to hit the garment industry.

Nearly two years after the disaster in which 1,100 people died, the Italian firm is the last major western fashion retailer that sourced clothing from the eight-floor building in capital city Dhaka to donate to the fund. But campaigners are disappointed that the total remains \$8 million short of an original \$30 million target. They had called for Benetton to make up the entire balance.

The company, which initially denied using any firms located in the factory complex, said it was donating double the amount advised by the accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The PwC report calculated the amount brands should contribute to the fund based on the original target and their share of production at the factory. Benetton's share was 1.8 per cent.

The fashion brand's contribution comes after more than one million people signed a petition on the campaigning site Avaaz calling for the



The Rana Plaza factory collapse killed 1,100 workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Italian label to donate alongside other western brands linked to the accident, which also saw nearly 2,400 workers injured – many severely. Benetton said its total contribution was \$1.6 million as it had also helped the victims via its own support programme in partnership with BRAC, a non-government organisation in Bangladesh.

The company said it has also agreed to raise working conditions and living standards for workers in the garment industry across its global supply chain. In a statement, Benetton added it would apply the principles of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to producers in other global markets.

The fact that this concern was recurrent every year means that prevention could be planned in advance, the union said.

The short term costs would be much lower than the long term consequences of not planning at all, in which case educators end up on long stretches of sick leave with direct consequences on the education and continuity of students.

JAMAICA

Proposed 'passport' for workers

Jamaica's Labour and Social Security Ministry will introduce a "workers' passport" in the construction industry later this year. The document, aimed at ensuring every worker on site undertakes a five-hour occupational safety and health basic training programme, comes as part of a raft of OSH changes.

AFRICA

Study on HIV and AIDS workplace initiatives

HIV and AIDS workplace initiatives should be integrated into national AIDS programmes, according to a new report by the International Labour Organization.

The study, which assessed HIV and AIDS workplace initiatives across 10 African countries, found that about 79 per cent of workplaces investigated had increased uptake of voluntary counselling and testing services. And the cost of not having a workplace programme far exceeded the cost of having one – six workplaces in three countries undertook positive cost benefit analysis.

In addition, the cost of introducing low-cost insurance plans in Namibia, Zambia and Kenya had helped companies save costs they were facing due to absenteeism.

AUSTRALIA

Directors should be liable for work accidents, say unions

Unions are demanding that company directors be made to pay fines personally if a worker dies due to employer negligence.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions believes company directors should be made personally liable for occupational health and safety fines resulting from a workplace death, even where a business was restructured to avoid payment.

But the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) rejected the union push, saying the additional provisions were unnecessary.

Ai Group national workplace relations director Stephen Smith said that the current laws "struck the right balance in terms of penalties and liability".

"They impose very significant penalties, not only for companies but for directors and senior managers who don't meet their responsibilities," he said. "We are not supportive of any changes to the laws."

NEW ZEALAND

Talleys fined NZ\$48k over crewman's death

Seafood giant Talleys Group has been fined NZ\$48,000 and ordered to pay NZ\$35,000 to the family of a crewman killed after falling nearly seven metres through a ship's hatch in Nelson in May 2012.

The company was found guilty of failing to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of its employees after the death of crewman Cain Adams.

Adams died while working on the Capt MJ Souza after he stepped onto a hatch on the main deck that rotated, causing him to fall through another open hatch in the deck below to the floor of the vessel's fish well. At the time of the accident, several contractors were working on the vessel, with the hatch on the main deck left vented, or partly open, to allow hoses and cables to pass through it.

In his judgment, District Court Judge Ian Mill said the captain and crew were lulled into a false sense of security from years of using the same practice without incident and always treating a vented hatch as safe.

He added the company "either foresaw the risk but did not take all reasonably practical steps in the circumstances of this case or ought to have foreseen the risk and failed to do so".

USA

Worker cooked to death in oven

A tuna processing plant in Los Angeles has been charged with violating safety regulations after a worker died in an industrial oven.

Jose Melena was carrying out maintenance in the pressure cooker at Bumble Bee Foods' Santa Fe Springs plant on 11 October 2012 when a colleague, who mistakenly thought Melena was in the bathroom, filled it with six tonnes of canned tuna and switched it on.

When a supervisor noticed Melena, 62, was missing, an announcement was made on the intercom and employees searched for him, according to a report by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

His body was found two hours later after the pressure cooker, which reached a temperature of 132°C, was turned off and opened.

The company, its plant operations director Angel Rodriguez and former safety manager Saul Florez were each charged with willfully violating rules that require implementing a safety plan, rules for workers entering confined spaces, and a procedure to keep machinery or equipment turned off if someone's working on it.

Rodriguez and Florez could face up to three years in prison and fines up to

\$250,000 if convicted of all charges, prosecutors said. Bumble Bee Foods faces a maximum fine of \$1.5 million.

The state's occupational safety agency previously cited the San Diego-based company for failing to properly assess the danger to employees working in large ovens and fined it \$74,000.

IRELAND

High suicide levels in construction

Figures show startlingly high levels of suicides among men working in and around the industry, according to a new report.

'Mind Our Workers', a joint report and campaign by the Construction Industry Federation and suicide prevention organisation Pieta House, found that an estimated 1,039 men from a construction/production background committed suicide between 2008 and 2012. That was almost half the total of 2,137 male suicides between those years.

"The level of suicide in the construction sector has been startling," said CIF director general Tom Parlon. "As an industry we can't ignore this problem — there is a necessity to help those in need."

CIF and Pieta House pointed out that men account for 108,300, or 93 per cent of the 116,700 people working in the construction industry.

NEPAL

Nepal earthquake death toll exceeds 6,000

Hundreds of thousands of people have been made homeless by a massive earthquake on 25 April.

The death toll in the 7.8 magnitude earthquake has passed 6,000, and thousands remain unaccounted for.

Many children are orphaned and homeless. Thousands of villages have been devastated, with up to 90 per cent of clinics and schools in some districts rendered unusable.

They urgently need tents, blankets, medicine and food.

Three thousand people are still unaccounted for in the badly hit Sindhupalchowk district, while little is known about the northern Gorkha district, which was one of the epicentres, where



The 7.8 magnitude quake struck on 25 April

about 10,000 people live. Local officials fear widespread destruction.

People need urgent help. Please donate to Nepal Welfare Trust by visiting www.nepalwelfaretrust.org or call Trustees on 07833 473 532.

Your help will make a big difference. Thank you.

Watered down

We look at the health, safety and environmental impacts of fires at waste sites.

In November 1986 a major chemical works fire in Basel (Switzerland) caused thousands of cubic metres of fire-fighting water and other specialised extinguishing agents to enter the River Rhine. Over 1,300 tonnes of agro chemicals and 440 tonnes of mercury in the runoff contaminated the river with devastating effects on wildlife downstream. Within a week the contaminants had travelled the length of The Rhine and entered the North Sea. The river took more than two years to recover its full biodiversity.

With every reasonable sized fire there will be some fire water runoff. As it finds its way out of the site often it soaks into the surrounding soil where the pollutants may leach into the water table. If the runoff finds its way into local drainage systems, sewage works or waterways may become contaminated. So we can't just focus on extinguishing fires – we must also consider the potential pollution problems that may arise as a consequence of fighting these fires. Fires in domestic and small commercial chemical storage depots, local councils' landfill sites, community and industrial refuse and recycling sites, animal establishments and scrap yards all have the potential to generate toxic fire water runoff.

There are two main principles relating to fire water runoff pollution, which include health and safety issues. These principles can be adopted worldwide:

- the "precautionary" principle
- the "polluter pays" principle.

The definition of 'fire water' is very broad and can be considered as "the effluent (liquid waste) generated as the result of applying water to put out a fire" and "all its accumulated constituents".

SHE principles

Subject to the substances that are stored on site, the hazardous

substances register will/should list all the hazardous substances along with the associated safety data sheets (SDS).

Within the European Union the SDS contain sections applicable to environmental planning, for example Section 12: Ecological impact and Section 10: Stability and reactivity of the material. These are very important when you are considering fire water.

We must not overlook the duty of care we have, under both civil and criminal law, to the emergency service workers who will be expected to work in and around these environments. Schedule 5 of the Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations (COMAH) 1999 (as amended in 2005) requires the occupier of the site or premises to have a fire water policy, or one that incorporates fire water management emergency plans.

Who is affected?

Your organisation must carry out a professional assessment of the potential impact of your day to day operations. It is important to be aware that there may be many regulatory obligations that will need to be recognised. The level of insurance premiums will also be based on how effective your environmental protection plans are judged to be by your insurers.

Duties

The planning stage for a new site or premises will require:

- the necessary legal permissions
- ground surveys
- contact with the Environment Agency and local water, drainage and river undertakers
- contact with the emergency services
- contact with the highways agencies
- preparation of a site drainage plan, which should include a schematic map of the facility and services
- arrangements for the local fire



Further information

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Article 16(3)(a)(i) Mitigating the Effects of Fire: <http://bit.ly/1O6Mhh9>
- 'Reducing Fire Risks at Waste Management Sites' from the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH): <http://bit.ly/1cpcpbn>
- Schedule 5 of the Control of Major Accident Hazards (Amendment) Regulations 2005: <http://bit.ly/1Os22RI>
- References to the Basel Chemical Fire 1986: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandoz_chemical_spill
- The Environmental Liability Directive 2004: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/liability>



service to regularly visit the site for them to assess their capabilities to deal with a developing fire and the fire water runoff arrangements.

Documents and records

These records should be kept on site, preferably in a low fire-risk area:

- site drainage plan
- site installed fire equipment testing and maintenance
- site water supplies inspections
- staff fire safety training records
- staff fire equipment training records
- fire alarm, warning and detection testing and maintenance records
- risk assessments for health, safety and environmental impacts
- fire evacuation drills records
- emergency services action pack.

Training

Many fires can be averted by the swift action of staff. Employees should be regularly trained in fire safety awareness and in actions on the discovery of a fire. A good way of delivering this training is through tool box talks. Drills and exercises should be undertaken at least once a year and should be varied in the content to address the range of fires and pollution circumstances that may be encountered.

The fire drill management should be put in place to ensure that training renewal dates are not missed or overlooked. The effectiveness of response to drills and exercises (including any real fires) should be critically reviewed to identify improvements.

Staff training and exercises with the local fire service will ensure that the local fire service is fully familiar with the site, the water supplies and provided installed arrangements and portable facilities to limit the amount of fire water runoff leaving the site.

If you are looking for advice, call the health and safety information helpline with your questions on **+44 (0)1296 678 465** or email **iirms.helpline@alcumusgroup.com** for information on any health and safety related topic. Here are just a few of your recent queries.

Q&As

STANDING FOR WORK

Our staff members are required to assist visitors. Previously they sat at desks, but research shows assistants are seen as more approachable if they are standing. So they will now be required to work standing at desks and walking around helping visitors.

My question relates to the interpretation of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations and the provision of seating. It is not intended to provide seating at these desks. Do we comply with the regulations? Is there research to support the case for working in a standing position? I have found some material regarding lower limb disorders, but equally sitting all day is not regarded as good for health, posture, heart rate slowing, etc.

According to the HSE's document *Workplace health, safety and welfare – A short guide for managers*: "Workstations should be suitable for the people using them and for the work they do. People should be able to leave workstations swiftly in an emergency. If work can or must be done sitting, seats which are suitable for the people using them and for the work they do should be provided. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back, and footrests should be provided for workers who cannot place their feet flat on the floor." This document can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf

Therefore providing seating is not a requirement as seats are necessary if work can or must be done sitting. Carry out a risk assessment to specify whether work can or must be done sitting. You have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of your employees. It is therefore useful to consider this when putting together a risk assessment. The HSE guidance document HSG57 Seating at Work offers further guidance. Page 13 offers advice and raises important points to consider when deciding whether seating or standing in the workplace is more appropriate. It can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg57.pdf

In addition, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety offers useful information on standing at work and the associated health benefits and hazards. Visit <http://bit.ly/1D5AZ6c>

Further guidance regarding risk factors associated with workplace design including arguments for standing and sitting at work in association with musculoskeletal disorders can also be found at www.hse.gov.uk/msd/uld/art/riskfactors.htm

OVERSEAS SAFETY STANDARDS

As a British-based organisation we are obviously aware of and do our utmost to comply with UK health and safety legislation. However some of our business is based in India. While accepting there are cultural differences and variances in accepted safety standards in India, I am conscious that any substantial incidents involving health, safety and welfare during our activities may have significant implications for our business, not least its reputation both overseas and in the UK.

Should we embrace similar standards to our UK ones overseas or is adoption of local law more appropriate?

In many cases legislation on occupational health and safety in India is based on the British Factories Act. At present, the key health and safety legislation in India includes:

- Factories Act 1948 (amended in 1954, 1970, 1976 and 1987)
- Mines Act 1952
- Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act 1986
- Plantation Labour Act 1951
- Explosives Act 1884
- Petroleum Act 1934
- Insecticide Act 1968
- Indian Boilers Act 1923
- Indian Electricity Act 1910
- Dangerous Machines (Regulations) Act 1983
- Indian Atomic Energy Act 1962
- Radiological Protection Rules 1971
- Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules 1989

It is often the case that compliance to British health and safety legislation will result in compliance in India. However, variations do exist and must be understood to ensure your activities are compliant and meet the required standards in India.

Information regarding Indian workplace laws and regulations is available at <http://bit.ly/1JZbEAU> (the Kingfisher Guide to

Indian workplace laws and regulations) and <http://bit.ly/1GaGVPZ> (the ILO's description of the provision of workplace health and safety in India).

ELECTRICAL INCIDENTS

My question relates to Schedule 2 – Dangerous Occurrences (Electrical Incidents) of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. The phrase 'fire or explosion' is used; while it is clear what is meant by the term fire, what does the HSE define as an explosion under an electrical incident that is to be reported under RIDDOR?

Would an electrical arc caused by an accidental short circuit constitute an explosion in this context under the reporting requirements? Would an electrical arc caused by an accidental short circuit constitute an explosion and where there was a potential for injury of death in this context be reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR?

The HSE's guidance to the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (<http://bit.ly/1zC8BbO>) states that electrical explosions include the violent and catastrophic rupture of any electrical equipment. Switchgear, motors and power cables are liable to explode if they are subjected to excessive currents, which release violent electromagnetic forces and dissipate heat energy, or if they suffer prolonged internal arcing faults. Explosions whose source of ignition is electrical include ignition of flammable vapours, gases, liquids and dusts by electric sparks, arcs or the high surface temperature of electrical equipment.

Arcing causes a particular type of burn injury which is distinct from other types. Arcing generates ultra violet radiation which causes damage akin to severe sunburn. Molten metal particles from the arc itself can penetrate, burn and lodge in the flesh. These effects are additional to any radiated heat damage caused by the arc. Arcing faults can occur if the energy available at a piece of electrical equipment is sufficient to maintain a conductive path through the air or insulation between

two conductors which are at different potentials. Under fault flashover conditions, currents many times the nominal rating or setting of a protective device may flow before those devices operate to clear the fault. Much energy is dissipated in the arc and depending on the electrical protection, may continue long enough to inflict very serious arcing burns or to initiate a fire in periods for example as short as 0.25 second, which is not an untypical minimum time for fault clearance. Arc flashovers caused during work on live circuit conductors are likely to be particularly hazardous because the worker is likely to be very near to or even enveloped by the arc. Such cases often lead to very serious, sometimes fatal, injuries.

You should report any work-related accident that comes under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.

In general, an electrical accident is reportable in any of the following circumstances:

- the person dies as a result of their injuries
- the person suffers a major injury
- as a result of their injury, the person is away from work for more than three days, or can't undertake their normal duties for more than three days
- a person receives an electric shock or burn that results in loss of consciousness, the need for resuscitation or admission to hospital for more than 24 hours
- plant or equipment comes into contact with overhead power lines
- there is an electrical short circuit or overload that causes a fire or explosion.

FIRE HYDRANTS

Are there any recognised standards for the installation of fire hydrants for different types of industries? How far from a building should they be? How do you calculate the number of hydrants necessary for a particular building and therefore the water capacity and pressure required?

According to BS 9990:2015, when installing a non-automatic fire-fighting system:

- adequate provision should be made by the responsible contractor to protect materials and components on site from deterioration or damage
- unloading, stacking and storage should be carried out with care to prevent damage to pipes and pipe threads, hydrants, fittings, couplings and other components used in the system
- pipes should be securely anchored before any pressure or flow tests are carried out.

Opinion poll

Suggest an issue to survey your fellow members on by emailing the editor: kellie.mundell@lexisnexis.co.uk

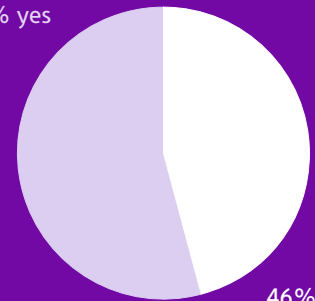
Did the changes to health and safety law in the last parliamentary term go far enough?

Next month's question

Do you think we are in danger of focusing too much on behavioural safety?

Have your say www.iirsm.org

54% yes



46% no

The system should be tested once installed. The three sets of tests that will need to be conducted and passed before the system can be used are:

- static pressure test
- flow and pressure test for wet mains
- tests on pumps.

A record of these and any subsequent tests should be kept by a responsible person.

The standard also states that fire hydrants should at least six metres away from the building and placed where the likelihood of falling debris is low. Hydrants should also be within 90 metres of an entrance to a building on site and within 90 metres of another hydrant. This means that for every 90 metre radius there should be another fire hydrant.

More information can be found in BS 9990:2015 Non-automatic fire-fighting systems in buildings – Code of Practice.

FLOUR DUST

According to the HSE, compressed air should not be used for blowing down flour dust from high pipework – but we find it impracticable to clear all dust by a combination of vacuum, wet dusting and the use of LEV. Can we use compressed air providing that only the cleaners are in situ and will be protected by respiratory equipment? Or can you suggest an alternative for cleaning a flour mill?

The HSE's top 10 tips for flour handling states vacuums should be used instead of brushes to clear up dust (see <http://bit.ly/1Oywzvm>). The HSE also advises:

- Every day, clean the workroom. Stop dust being stirred up and reduce slip hazards.
- Clean general workrooms once a week.

Remember to clean overhead beams, heating pipes and light fittings to reduce the risk of secondary dust explosion.

- Use a Type H vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA filter to clear up dust.
- Deal with spills immediately. This needs a dust mask. Shovel large spills carefully into a waste bag or spill hopper.
- Don't clean up with a brush or with compressed air.

The HSE offers advice on how to clean up safely when in bakery environments: "It's best to use a wet mop or high-efficiency vacuum cleaner," it says. "Avoid use of compressed airlines for cleaning." *Bakers – time to clear the air!* is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg429.pdf

If you apply the above suggestions and are not satisfied, perhaps you could reconsider the type of vacuum cleaner you are currently using and select an alternative. Guidance on the selection of vacuum cleaners is provided by the HSE in: 'Appendix 1 – Guidance on the selection of vacuum cleaners for low combustibility organic granules and dusts (eg flour)'. See www.hse.gov.uk/food/dustexplosionapp1.htm.

It would be beneficial to consider the main causes of dust accumulation within the mill and find ways of reducing/eliminating these causes. See <http://bit.ly/1Oyqa3g> for a study investigating ways to reduce the dustiness of bakery ingredients and exposure to allergens.

Information on dust extraction and guidance for cleaning is also available in FL4 Flour dust control from the HSE: www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/industry/baking.htm

It may also be worth purchasing the Federation of Bakers' Blue Book: Guidance on Dust Control and Health Surveillance in Bakeries, available at <http://bit.ly/1JZm5V3>.

Douglas Leech FIIRSM

Chemicals specialist Douglas Leech talks to us about the significant changes in his sector's legislative framework, and why he'll never stop enjoying it.

How did your career start?

At 16 I realised that further education was not for me so I joined a youth training scheme placement at Merck, Sharpe and Dohme pharmaceuticals. The experience I gained there, through the training in all departments and day release at college, provided me with the grounding and desire to work in the chemical sector.

How did you become involved in health and safety?

The firm that employed me was acquired by a holding company, which soon realised that the health and safety provisions in the organisation were very limited. I was offered the chance to move sideways and take on the health and safety role thanks to my knowledge of chemicals.

What do you get out of your job?

Working for a trade association (CBA) representing a large number of small to medium sized enterprises and providing advice and training, I gain a large degree of job satisfaction from helping others. By sharing my experiences and translating regulatory requirements into 'plain and simple language' to allow them to comply with legislation rather than fear it, is immensely fulfilling.

On the flip side, liaising with UK and government departments and agencies, such as the HSE, and helping them to understand the implications 'at the coalface' of apparent minor variations allows me to help reduce the confusion that I felt when faced with legislation that did not make sense.

What's the most memorable experience you've had in your career?

Being invited by the HSE to train a group of inspectors. The slot at the end of a three-day training session follows

a number of specialist inspectors who explain the legal aspects and so I attempt to pull everything together to give an insight into the landscape they could encounter in the field.

What's the biggest challenge facing the health and safety profession?

Scepticism and ridicule of those who do not understand the value of proportionate, pragmatic and sustainable safety management. Whenever I mention I am a health and safety professional I am often met with a funny look followed by a comment regarding 'conkers' or 'fun police'.

The fact that it is not taught in schools means that people all too easily misquote health and safety. They don't have the general knowledge to confront the idiotic. The challenge is overcoming the bad press health and safety has gained over the years and making people realise it is an integral part of life.

Would you like to see any legislative changes?

I would like to see the introduction of a more holistic, linked up methodology. Over the years, compliance has become more difficult due to conflicts with other regulations. This is more prevalent as almost 70 per cent of UK legislation originates in Europe and the compromise process the EU uses to agree text results in legislation that is difficult to interpret.

What issues can you see coming up in your sector?

There have been a number of significant changes to the legislative framework in the chemicals sector. Many of the regulations have similar deadlines for implementation and it can be difficult to effectively manage the transition without planning and constant vigilance.

What's the most challenging problem you've had to overcome?

The most challenging problem related to the control of noise in a production area. An assessment showed that noise

If you would like to take part in our interview page, please email kellie.mundell@lexisnexis.co.uk



in the area, underneath a mezzanine floor, was over the requisite levels and required radical changes to be made compliant. The problem I had was convincing senior management that one of the five production lines needed to be decommissioned to reduce the levels. Thankfully I was successful and productivity was not adversely affected.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

"It is not what you know but the fact that you know where to obtain the information you need."

Why did you join IIRSM?

Because the institute is international and a large part of my work is in Europe.

What do you most like about the institute?

The network. And the information in the magazine and on the website, which provides material on other jurisdictions, is really interesting.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

It may sound cheesy but the job satisfaction that I enjoy through the diversity of activities in my current role is such that I feel it's unlikely I will have moved on from my current position.

The legislation relating to the chemical sector is always evolving and I am learning new things every day.