



HSE Construction Division
Chief Inspector for Construction: Kevin Myers

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY INITIATIVE *HEALTHY HANDLING 2005*

Work-related ill health affects significant numbers of construction workers. For example, musculoskeletal disorders are more common in construction than in any other industry. Back problems, cement dermatitis and vibration white finger can ruin lives and force people out of work. Setting aside strong moral and legal implications this does not make business sense in an industry with an ageing workforce facing skills shortages.

During March 2005, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Construction Division will carry out a GB-wide initiative entitled *Healthy Handling 2005*.

Inspectors will then focus on:

- **Order and organisation** fundamental to occupational health management;
- **Lifting and carrying** manual handling of materials and equipment can cause back injury and muscle strain;
- **Wet cement** skin contact may lead to dermatitis and burns;
- **Hand-held vibrating tools** power tools can cause hand-arm vibration syndrome e.g. white finger, and/or hearing loss.

This initiative is intended to assist the industry in addressing these problems.

The following four pages provide advice on key, sensible precautions that Inspectors will expect to find where hazards are present¹. These matters should be considered by designers, assessed by contractors, and suitable control measures agreed and specified, before work starts.

Enforcement action, including prohibition of work and prosecution, may be taken where effective precautions are not in place. Inspectors may also intervene where clients, designers or planning supervisors have not complied with their CDM duties.

However, by giving this advice we hope to find that such action is unnecessary. Please review what you are currently doing in the light of the advice in these pages. With a concerted effort we can, working together, make long-term improvements to the health of construction workers.

KEVIN MYERS
CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR CONSTRUCTION

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¹ This advice has been prepared to assist dutyholders during the HSE initiative *Healthy Handling 2005*. Other free information is available from the *HSE Infoline* on 08701 545500 and from the *HSE website* at www.hse.gov.uk. Priced publications can be obtained from *HSE Books* on Tel: 01787 881165 or Fax: 01787 313995.

If you wish to discuss the contents please contact *Healthy Handling Helpline* on ☎ 01582 444248 or email ✉ infolnet@hse.gsi.gov.uk You will not be asked your name, company or project details, however an Inspector will be happy to help.

CONSTRUCTION HEALTHY HANDLING INITIATIVE 2005

Poor site order:

CONSIDER ...

- untidy conditions
- blocked ladder access
- unsafe storage
- trip and slip hazards



Order and organisation

Disorderly sites and poor organisation can result in serious injury from slips and trips and longer term disability arising from musculo-skeletal disorders

HSE INSPECTORS WILL EXPECT TO FIND:

- **clean, tidy and well organised sites that are kept in good order;**
- **pedestrian access routes and places of work kept free from obstructions;**
- **materials stored and left in a safe and accessible condition.**

TOP TIPS

Plan and organise storage and delivery areas before work starts

Design scaffolds to keep building entrances clear

Tidy as you go and at the end of each working day

Provide rubbish chutes to remove waste from working platforms

Further guidance - Free from HSE website www.hse.gov.uk or 08701 545500 (unless marked *)

[Preventing slips trips and falls at work - INDG 225L](#)

[The absolutely essential health and safety tool kit - INDG 344](#)

Slips and trips: guidance for employers on identifying hazards and controlling risk - HSG 155 *

Health and safety in construction - HSG 150 *

CONSTRUCTION HEALTHY HANDLING INITIATIVE 2005

Unsafe lifting technique:

CONSIDER ...

- mechanising the task
- use of lifting aids
- assessment of the task, individual, load and environment
- training requirements
- specification of lighter components



Lifting and carrying

Manual handling can cause serious, long-term disabling musculo-skeletal injuries. Heavy blocks, kerbs, cills and lintels present a particularly high risk

HSE INSPECTORS WILL EXPECT TO FIND:

- manual handling tasks eliminated by design or mechanisation where practicable;
- safe handling based on assessment of risk from manual handling operations;
- all workers trained in basic safe manual handling techniques.

TOP TIPS

Design-in safe lifting points for lintels and cills and identify the weight of all items to be manually handled, using lighter components where practicable

Use mechanical means to deliver materials to the point of use

Organise scaffolding to make block laying easier, for example by providing tables or half lifts to minimise bending and twisting

Use mechanical placement aids, e.g. vacuum lifts for kerbs and slabs

Further guidance - Free from HSE website www.hse.gov.uk or 08701 545500 (unless marked *)

[Are you making the best use of lifting and handling aids – INDG 398](#)

[Handling heavy building blocks - CIS 37](#)

[Manual handling assessment charts - INDG 383](#)

[Getting to grips with manual handling: a short guide - INDG 143](#)

[Kerb handling - HSE Press release E103-05 -19 July 2004](#)

[Kerb handling - HSE Site Safe News 7 May 2004](#)

[Backs for the future, safe manual handling in construction - HSG 149 *](#)

